

Christmas in Cambridgeshire: a scrapbook 1897-1990

Facts, Features and (occasional) Fallacies
reported in Cambridge Newspapers

summarised by

Mike Petty

Many of these stories were featured in my ‘Looking Back’ column in the Cambridge News from 1996-2014. They are supplemented by some selections ‘From our Old Files’ published in the Cambridge Independent Press and other notes.

The complete ‘Cambridgeshire Scrapbook’ of which this is a small section is published online at bit.ly/CambsCollection

I have digital and other copies of most of the stories summarised.
I hope to publish these online one day. If you would like them in the meantime then please get in touch.

The original volumes are housed in the Cambridgeshire Collection at Cambridge Central Library where there are many other indexes dating back to 1770.

They also have detailed newspaper cuttings files on over 750 topics that have been compiled since the 1960s.

Newspapers sometimes get things wrong. I copy things out incorrectly. Do check

There are a multitude of spelling and layout errors. Please forgive or correct them

News never stops but this file was finished on 31 August 2016.

I will maintain supplements and corrections – contact me for anything you need

Please make what use of these notes that you may. Kindly remember where they came from

See my website – www.mikepetty.org.uk for further notes.

Mike Petty, Stretham

2016

1897 12 14

In view of the approach of the Christmas season, and in order to assist our readers in their shopping we today give the first of our notices of the special attractions and goods which are to be found in the Cambridge shops. Every family, however unmusical at other seasons of the year, burst forth into song as Christmas Day approaches. Music for every taste can be bought at Mr Miller's warehouse, Sidney Street. Pianos and all instruments of the best makes are ready for purchase or hire

1897 12

Round the Cambridge shops. Bright within and bright without is Mr Otto Wehrle's jewellery shop in Regent- Street. Mr Wehrle offers ladies' silver watches with silver chains at 12s.6d. An especially commendable present is a solid silver afternoon tea set offer at £4.10.0. As a special Christmas offer Mr Wehrle will present every purchaser of 5s. and upwards with a useful gift to the value of 1s.6d. A goodly selection of Christmas presents are on view at Mr G.W. Morley's Exchange and Mart, Mill-road. Broaches, bangles and button-hooks of every shape and size, and at every prize, meet the eyes of the generous purchaser, and everyone may be sure of getting something suitable for the most difficult to please

1897 12 15

Christmas cheer, p3 *

1897 12 16

Christmas cheer, p3

1897 12 17

Christmas cheer, p3

1897 12 28

It is a striking proof of the charitable feeling which exists at Christmas that the inmates of the workhouses throughout the land receive so much attention during the festive season. At Cambridge, the institution so excellently superintended by Mr Luke Hosegood, is quite as fortunate as any other and the last few days have, doubtless, been the brightest that the inmates of "the house" have known for the last 12 months

1898 01 05

St Barnabas Christmas tree, p2

1898 12 14

The proposal that as Christmas Day falls upon a Sunday the general holiday should extend not only over Boxing Day but also Tuesday has received substantial support in Cambridge. It would be difficult to exaggerate the extent to which this additional breathing space will be appreciated and no one will be seriously inconvenienced by the closing. Shopping in the town will be all the more brisk before Christmas, because there is to be a respite after, and assistants will put all the more heart into their work because of the good holiday that lies before them

American bowling saloon now open, p3

1898 12 15

A large number of buyers, graziers, farmers and visitors assembled at the Newmarket cattle market on the occasion of Mr George Blencowe's annual Christmas sale. During the morning all the roads presented a busy scene and as time drew near to the commencement of the sale the place became congested with latecomers, all anxious to unload in time. A preliminary look round the various stalls and pens showed 90 oxen and 300 good fat sheep. In accordance with the usual custom the prize

winners were sold first with an Angus ox exhibited by Mr C. Morbey, Soham, eventually knocked down for £39

Christmas cheer shops, p3

1898 12 17

A stroll through Petty Cury, Cambridge and a glance at the shop windows of Boots Limited gives a good idea of the effort which this firm has made to cater for all tastes and all classes in the selection of Christmas presents. The windows have been dressed in a most skilful and artistic fashion and they look very effective. Articles of every conceivable description are on view and an inspection of the interior of the shop soon convinces one that for price and quality, the old adage, "go further and fare worse", very aptly applies. Those desirous of purchasing suitable presents for their cousins, their aunts, and sweethearts should pay a visit to Boots, in the Cury

Parish constables report, p3 *

1898 12 19

Christmas cheer, p2

1898 12 24

For some weeks preparations for Christmas time have been going forward, the markets have teemed with the good things of this life. Cambridge has had its own share in the general improvement that has taken place and the agricultural district has reported a better harvest than it has done for many years. We are therefore justified in holding a merry Christmas - merrier than usual. It is in the hope that the season that has now begun may be for each one a season of joy that the Cambridge Daily News wishes its readers - "A merry Christmas"

1898 12 28

Life in the workhouse is not so eventful that Yuletide festivities are looked forward to with anything but eager anticipation. It is the one important event of the year, bringing with it liberal fare, relaxation of the necessarily somewhat stringent rules, visits and gifts from kindly disposed persons, enjoyable entertainments, and a general air of geniality and heartiness which even those whose lot has been beset with many misfortunes can enter into. It may safely be said that in no union are more strenuous efforts made in this direction than at Chesterton where the capable Master gives the inmates a genuinely happy time

1898 12 28

A strange discovery was made on Boxing Day at the Cambridge railway station by a cleaner. It appears that in the performance of his ordinary duties he was sweeping the carriages of a London and North Western train working between Cambridge and Bletchley, when he came across a brown paper parcel concealed under the seat of a third class compartment. Suspicious of its contents, the man removed it to the cloak room. The parcel was opened without delay and discovered to contain the dead body of a newly born male child.

1898 12 28

On Christmas Eve the parish authorities at Steeple Morden were called upon to perform a strange act of seasonal charity. A young woman who had been seen about the neighbouring villages on the previous day gave birth to a child under a hedge by the wayside, where she had lain down to sleep, in the bitterly cold weather. The spot was far from human habitations and when the officials came on the scene they found the woman in a helpless plight and the new-born child dead by her side. They had her conveyed to the Union workhouse at Royston.

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1899 01 03

A most extraordinary story has just come to light respecting the matrimonial affairs of a young woman residing in Cambridge. It appears she has been keeping company with a young man who lived away from Cambridge and it was arranged that the wedding should take place on Christmas Day. It transpired however that the laws with respect to residence in the district had not been complied with and the wedding was postponed until Sunday. The appointed hour drew near, but no bridegroom turned up, nor has he been seen since. Upon being shown the groom's photograph a police officer identified him as being "wanted" in connection with an assault which has since proved fatal. It is hoped the efforts of the police to bring such a heartless fellow to justice will prove successful Melbourn Christmas revelry

1899 12 19

Sir – will you allow me to appeal on behalf of journey-men bakers for one day's holiday this Christmas? Christmas Day being Monday there will be dinners to bake, which will take up till two o'clock at least. Then at night there will be the work of preparing sponge for Tuesday's bread. With so many good things about there will be not much bread wanted. I, myself, am serving 143 customers daily and there was not one who did not seem anxious to do what they could for us. You will agree that bakers' work is very hard and trying with long hours and little pay and certainly less holidays than any other trade – "Baker"

1899 12 23

Following a well-established custom, the employees of the New Theatre Company, whose duties are more particularly concerned with stage arrangements, gather at the University Arms to partake of a substantial meal. The menu was characteristic of the season and comprised roast beef, boiled and roast leg of mutton, with vegetables, discussed to the accompaniment of English ale, followed by Christmas pudding. Tobacco and cigars were supplied ad.lib. and for those whose tastes were in that direction there was "a wee drappie of whisky"

1900

There were no doubt religious services at Fordham on Christmas Day, but with a goodly number of the youth of the place the attraction of the church proved less powerful than those of a public house. A policeman found a large congregation in a room but in less than a minute he was left alone with a table, a box of dice and some coppers. It needed not a Sherlock Holmes to arrive at the conclusion that gambling had been forward and the gamblers had scarpered. It is an unmitigated evil that children should be encouraged to gamble. Let those who have a care for the moral welfare of Fordham look to it

1900 11 08

Sir – your correspondent surely must be joking when he pleads that business should be suspended from Saturday evening, December 22nd until the following Thursday morning. Shop assistants have very little overtime work at Christmas now, and almost everyone has a week or ten days' holiday in the summer, besides early closing on Thursdays, so they cannot need a holiday so badly as he infers. I think we are tending towards too many holidays, which are making our young people think far more about pleasure than business and their future. And think what it would mean to the poor who have not the means to lay in a week's supply of goods – 'Trader'

1900 12 27

The Union Workhouse at Caxton, an institution which is unique for the advanced ages attained by its inmates, celebrated Christmastide in true festive style. To many a grateful old man and woman who lot has been so cast Caxton workhouse spells 'home' and the cheery demeanour of many bore

undeniable testimony to the unremitting care and attention which is bestowed upon them. A number of the inmates are confined to their beds but making a tour through the spick and span wards one could not but be struck with the effort that was being put forward by thoughtful officials on behalf of the helpless

1901 01 29

Mr Cattrall said he was very sorry to find Newmarket behind other places as far as the churches were concerned. He understood that both All Saints' and St Mary's churches had neglected to drape on Sunday to mark the death of Queen Victoria. Why, even in Ireland, they did so, and every denomination, including the chapels in the town, had not failed in that respect. Mr Ellis said All Saints had been decorated for Christmas and the question was whether the death of the Queen should displace that.

1901 12 27

Up to Monday afternoon there was every prospect of a Christmas such as Englishmen love, clear skies, hard roads and several degrees of frost. Vendors of skates had already done a brisk trade and those who possessed the pleasurable implements hauled them out of their summer resting places, furbished them up and promised themselves some hours' enjoyment on the ice during the Christmas holidays. Just as the ice was at bearing point in came the thaw and Yuletide was ushered in with driving rain. The treachery of the English climate is sufficient explanation.

1901 12 28

Even at this distance of time from its occurrence the calamity known as the "Liberator Smash" has not ceased to have a disastrous effect upon its victims. An old inhabitant of Linton was one of the many who lost his savings in that great financial fraud and it is supposed that this so affected his mind that on Christmas Day he took his own life. Deceased was in the habit of referring to his loss in a despondent manner and lately suffered from acute sleeplessness.

1902 02 04

In at least one thing Cambridge is abreast of the times. She has the craze for ping-pong, or to call it by its more dignified name, table tennis. For a long time past the ping of the racket could be heard coming from the houses of the up-to-date. By Christmastime ping-pong parties had become quite general, ping-pong clubs were formed and now Cambridge has been brought into line with the metropolis by holding a tournament. It was to be held at the Conservative Club, but owing to the large entry it was decided to transfer operations to the Corn Exchange. The one table reserved for ladies was always an attraction. The lady competitors, generally in smart costumes, played a milder game, though there were some who would have made the male sex jump about

1902 05 23

Ely Board of Guardians discussed what they proposed to do in regard to the Coronation and agreed to only one day's festivities. Mr Darby said they at Sutton wished to bring over to the village all the inmates belonging thereto. The Guardians had no objection. Coronation fare for the inmates should be similar to that provided at Christmastime and during the afternoon they would be allowed to attend the festivities in the town. Each would be presented with a Coronation medal and the Master would provide four sets of draughts and dominoes for the use of inmates.

1902 09 24

Cambridge Football Association heard that on many college grounds football was played up to Christmas and the ground was prepared for cricket afterwards. The same thing should be done on Parker's Piece. Manuring had already begun. The manure was the sweeping of the streets, which had not been sifted, but had been raked. People were going over the ground and picking up stones. To start to play football and then proceed to manure the ground was giving with one hand and taking away with the other. The surveyor had said he hoped that some rain would come and wash it in.

1902 12

A good Christmas dinner is desired by all and Messrs Sturton Bros of Fitzroy Street, Cambridge are open to provide everything required. A good fat turkey or goose and a nice ripe Stilton cheese are their specialities. Their groceries are of the very best quality and in the hardware department will be found a large display of useful goods suitable for presents.

1902 12 22

Sir – most large towns are closing on Saturday and thus giving their employees a splendid holiday. The plea against the Saturday holiday is that people are unable to cater for four days but it appears that in the neighbouring town of March they think differently, and if they can close there, surely we can here. The grocers' assistants have put in a lot of extra time and I think our employers could give us at least a half-day holiday – “Grocer”

1903 12 08

Christmas Day happening to fall on a Friday means that trade generally will be at a standstill for three days in succession. Housewives must either purchase their stocks of meat, bread, fish and vegetables on the Thursday or dealers in these goods must open on Saturday. Opinion is divided. Some bakers say they cannot make enough bread on Thursday for the three following days but others say they sell practically no bread on Boxing Day as people do not eat so much at Christmas. Butchers are inclined to close on the Saturday but fishmongers, where the supply of ice is an item of the trade, will open for a few hours only. Unless united action is taken some persons engaged in the four trades will have their holidays considerably cut into

1903 12 28

The idea of a happy Christmas being spent by those who are unfortunate enough to inhabit a workhouse is to most people incomprehensible. But in Cambridge workhouse Christmas Day is a happy day. The master tempers discipline with mercy and sheds a small ray of sunshine upon those whose lives have been darkened with misfortune. He has done more for the salvage of wrecked humanity that is ever likely to be known by the public at large

1903 12 28

Addenbrooke's Hospital unfortunately contained many sufferers at Christmas but the season of goodwill was ushered in with the usual ceremony. A large number of toys having been sent to the Hospital every child was able to have one. Santa Claus distributed them from a splendid Christmas tree whose adornment by means of coloured electric lights was most picturesque. Each patient was the recipient of a parcel of clothing through the kindness of the Needlework Guild and Miss Bennett of Orwell. To the patients of the men's surgical and accident wards Mr Joseph Clark made a present of cigars and Mr Leathart, the assistant house surgeon, gave them pipes, tobacco and cigarettes, which were greatly appreciated. If a suitable environment is conducive to recovery from illness the patients must have made rapid progress this Christmas.

1903

Christmas in Cambridge did not pass without its sensation. On Boxing Day three men were walking along the river bank at the rear of the Abbey Estate when one fancied he discerned something struggling in the water. The light was dim so they struck a quantity of vestas but could see nothing. As they turned away the discovery of a woman's hat lying on the bank strengthened their belief that something was wrong. The alarm was given and since then those who delight in mysteries have had a subject for conversation. No one is reported missing and it maybe a practical joke.

1903 12 28

The Christmas holiday has been observed in Haverhill in the customary manner. On Christmas Eve the railway officials were kept extremely busy with numerous arrivals and departures, and thanks to the absence of fog, the train service for the most part was punctually kept. At noon on Christmas Day

toys, oranges etc were taken to the Burton End Church Sunday Schoolroom, being the proceeds of the recent ‘doll’ service and were distributed amongst the poor children of that part of the town.

1904 01 26

Cambridge magistrates said the custom of sending round for ‘Christmas Boxes’ was a bad one and liable to be greatly abused. They heard how a groom from Castle Street had obtained a shilling from the cashier at Hallack and Bond’s shop after claiming that he was an ostler at the Carrier’s Arms. He also tricked Eaden Lilley’s into giving him a similar sum. No less than 11 similar charges could have been made against the prisoner who was sentenced to seven days hard labour.

1904 12 31

The Master of Kedington Workhouse reported that nearly all the old men went one evening over Christmas and the greater part of them came home the worse for drink. One man was brought in a wheelbarrow, simply smothered with mud. Where the men got their drink is a mystery, but apparently the inhabitants of Haverhill had been exceedingly generous. Many of the paupers were not entirely without money: one firm had sent a shilling to each of twenty men who used to be in their employment, others had received letters from friends enclosing stamps. The result of the spree was an attack of dysentery among the men who had participated.

1904 12 31

Liquid air is no new thing in Cambridge for it was our own Professor Dewar who was the first scientist to obtain liquid in hydrogen. Its application to everyday life is new and emanates from the stage. The principal attractions at the Inventions and Trades Exhibition in the Corn Exchange will be Dr Savant’s demonstrations of a kettle boiled on ice, eggs poached in one second, grapes instantly turned into hailstones and ice cream made over fire. It is one of the most marvellous and astounding performances every placed before the public.

1905 01

Dr Seaton’s Animated Photographs and Concert Company visited Cambridge Guildhall on Boxing Day. The pictures include the latest Japanese and Russian war films, “Life in Canada” a grand film of 1,200 feet long, “The Kingdom of the Fairies” and a large variety of humorous subjects well worth witnessing. The performance included a high-class variety entertainment including Professor Carson, ventriloquist and mimic and Dr Seaton with his conjuring and plate-spinning.

1905 03 22

The story of a feud between two Waterbeach farmers was unfolded in the County Court. On Christmas Eve William Morton got out of a train at the station and went to the Lion Inn where his horse was put up. He remained until closing time and then rode home but somebody followed behind his cart; he used strong language and asked what he meant by hunting him home. They came to blows and he knocked two of his opponent’s teeth out. He was known as ‘The King of the Fens’ until he was knocked over. 05 03 22 a & b

1905 12 18

With the approach of Christmas shops are beginning to assume an extra brightness. Laurie and McConnal’s huge emporium has a collection of steam and clockwork toys together with dolls priced from the humble penny to 15s. They are selling the newest game ‘Quit’ at a particularly low price, something of the sort is almost indispensable to Christmas. 05 12 18a, b, c

1905 12 27

On the eve of Christmas merrymaking a gloom was cast over the little village of Kirtling by a tragedy. A shot was heard in the vicinity of a cottage and subsequently a seven-year-old girl startled some relatives by running into their house saying, ‘Mother is dead. Father has shot her’. Not caring to investigate the matter themselves they sent for the village constable, who was out. In the evening he

proceeded to the cottage where he found a woman's body lying in a pool of blood with a shot wound to the head. Her husband was sitting nearby nursing the youngest child, a baby. 05 12 27a
Christmas in Cambridge, p4

1905 12 28

A substantial free dinner was given at the People's Mission, off Sturton Street, Cambridge to all that could be crowded in. Over 200 enjoyed hot roast beef, legs of mutton, boiled beef, vegetables, Christmas puddings and tea. Afterwards gramophone selections and songs were much appreciated. Each person received an orange and each man a packet of tobacco. There will also be a free tea to about 300 poor children 05 12 28

Kirtling trial, p3

1905 12 29

About 250 of the poorest inhabitants of Cambridge attended the Christmas Free Dinner arranged by the Salvation Army at the Sturton Town Hall. Needless to say the fare provided was done full justice to and subsequently the guests were entertained by the Army Band. The function was attended by the Parliamentary candidates for the borough who shook hands with guests each of whom received a copy of the Christmas 'Way Cry' and a pamphlet on 'How to be Saved' 05 12 29a

1905 12 30

On Christmas Eve the casuals at Newton Union were given a liberal breakfast of bacon and eggs and told they could share the fare of the regular inmates and not be expected to work for their food and lodgings. A workhouse is not a bad place on Christmas Day. Discipline is relaxed, there is plenty of good food and not a few luxuries. One would have thought they would have seized the chance of such a comfortable day. Not they, they all took their leave. The explanation is simple. They can make a good thing out of begging from good-natured folk at Christmas. 05 12 30

1906 12 22

The question of Christmas holidays for shop assistants has been settled. At first tradesmen were rather slow to sign the petition of the Early Closing Association but at last it bore the signatures of all the principal traders. The public holiday in Cambridge will therefore extend from Monday night to Friday morning. On Boxing Day there are football matches and a cross-country run and performances of the pantomime 'Aladdin' at the Guildhall. 06 12 22

1906 12 27

Such a Christmas as has just been experienced in Cambridge occurs but few times within a lifetime. A good old-fashioned Christmas when the brightly-blazing Yule log, or its modern equivalent, is necessary to counteract the efforts of King Frost is as a rule so old-fashioned that it seems to have existed only in the picturesque imaginations of the novelist and pictorial artist. So also is the Christmas-card Christmas with the country covered with the white mantle of snow. Yet the festival of 1906 has been remarkable for both 06 12 27

1906 12 29

Christmas bathing in the river needs a Spartan spirit and a robust constitution. But in Cambridge sufficient men enjoy a jovial gathering at the Town Bathing Sheds every Christmas morning. With the mercury hovering above freezing point, water in dykes coated with ice and a keen wind blowing across the Fen, about 30 bold spirits plunged in and one swam to the Leys School. When he emerged from the water his skin had a bright red hue, but he was perfectly happy. 06 12 29b 07 06 25 & 25a

1907 12 14

There is considerable perturbation in regard to the application of the Prevention of Corruption Act to the time-honoured custom of giving and receiving Christmas boxes. The house-wife may still give her maid a half-crown upon Christmas morning, the master may have the satisfaction of a grin from his

man upon receipt of a similar sum, the postman may still be rewarded with his Yuletide trifle. But beyond Christmas boxes of this character is it not safe to go. - 07 12 14b

1907 12 20

Everyone's digestion is impaired at Christmas by the quantity of unsuitable food which our tyrannous English customs force us to consume. When your gastric juices are quite dried up, a length or two of toothsome tripe (fresh boiled daily) purchased at Edwards' Tripe Shop, 36 Fitzroy Street, will soon put you right. - 07 12 20

1907 12 27

Those unfortunate persons who are forced to accept the Workhouse as their home have little in the course of a year to look forward to, at any rate with pleasure. But at Chesterton Workhouse work is suspended on Christmas Day and they are allowed to spend as happy a time as possible. Gifts of tobacco, oranges and toys were distributed which helped to while away what would otherwise have been somewhat monotonous hours. - 07 12 27

1907 12 28

Christmas customs – decoration – no yew with holly, must remove every berry by Candlemas or misfortune; 'A green Christmas, a fat churchyard' – 07 12 28d

1907 12 28

About 100 were present at the Misses Storey's Christmas dance at the Victoria Assembly Ball Rooms, prettily decorated with ferns, mistletoe and festoons. Two new dances, the Empire barn dance and the Esperanto figured in the programme. There being a dearth of Valeta music Mr Oliver Clifton has produced a pretty composition named 'The Storey' which he played on the piano with Mr G. Jackson on violin. Dancing continued until 2.15 am. 07 12 28

1908 12 25

A change of moon has brought a change of weather, a welcome variation from the mud, mist and moist atmosphere of the last week or two. But weather prophets cannot promise us a typical old-fashioned Christmas with frost or snow, and for that the poorer-folk will be grateful. However it is a poor heart that will allow the old time spirit of jollity and goodwill to be suffocated by mist or washed-out by rain. CWN 08 12 25

1908 12 25

By this time the greater part of the Christmas shopping has been carried through. Shops have a blasé appearance but hundreds of households are the better stocked because of the depletion of the trading establishments. The holly and the ivy are over the pictures, the mistletoe is in ambush, Santa Claus is upon his philanthropic mission and all is in readiness for the celebration of 'The First Noxell' for those happy family reunions which Christmas brings in its train. CWN 08 12 25

1908 12 25

The Boxing Day Costermonger's Marathon Race started from Abbey Street with each competitor pushing a barrow to the Bottisham Swan (a distance of six miles) and back. Performances of the romantic drama 'From Shop Girl to Duchess' at the New Theatre appealed to many, while there were cinematograph exhibitions at the Guildhall and at Sturton Town Hall. CWN 08 12 25

1909 01 01

The Christmas holidays passed off very quietly in Gamlingay and there were but few attractions to entertain the visitors to the village, who were not so numerous as in former years. With the exception of the gaily-dressed shop windows there was little to show that the festive season was near and tradesmen generally were complaining about the slackness of the trade. The only outdoor attractions were two football matches at which there were large crowds and the Christmas of 1908 may be termed an indoor one. CWN 09 01 01

1909 01 01

"Where is the snow plough" was the question asked by several people in Histon when about half-a-foot of snow was allowed to lie in the main streets, greatly to the discomfort of pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Some say that the snow plough has not yet returned from its Christmas holidays, others say that it still lies where it was left on Eastern Monday, when it was last used. CWN 09 01 01

1909 03 12

Thomas Adkins of Musgrave Farm, Fen Ditton carried on a butcher's business in Norwich Street for 30 years. He was well-known at the Cattle Market and was one of the judges at the Christmas Fat Stock sales. His death at the age of 61 came as a surprise, as he usually enjoyed excellent health. About a month ago, however, he broke a blood vessel and in spite of constant and skilful medical attention he died. 09 03 12

1909 12 31

The festivities of Christmas Day passed off in a most enjoyable manner at Caxton Workhouse. The chapel, dining hall and sick wards were tastefully decorated one dinner consisted of roast beef, mutton, pork, plum pudding, beer and mineral waters. In the evening a few friends and the officers amused the inmates with a gramophone, singing and dancing. On Boxing Day Mrs Briscoe of Longstowe Hall invited the children to tea and gave each a present. CWN 09 12 31

1909 12 31

The people at Linton Union spent a happy Christmas. As usual they were given a good old-fashioned Christmas dinner of roast beef, pork and vegetables, plum-pudding and half-a-pint of ale or mineral water. The plum puddings disappeared with great rapidity and were evidently relished. During the day oranges, sweets, tobacco and pipes sent by Messrs Holttum were distributed. On Boxing Day the Master invited the officers to a whist drive as a solace for the hard work of Christmas Day. CWN 09 12 31

1909 12 31

At Swaffham Bulbeck on Christmas Day a portion of a wall of a cottage the property of Edward Fordham, tenanted by Mr Sidney Butler and family and Mrs Thompson, widow, crashed down into the adjoining garden. The contents of a bedroom and several other rooms were exposed to view. Owing to the mishap the families were compelled to pass the night as best they might on the ground floor, the bedrooms being considered too public and unsafe to make the night in the open a comfortable experience. CWN 09 12 31

1909 12 31

The Costermongers Boxing Day Marathon race was run between East Road and Bottisham and back. It is open to men who earn their living by hawking and the fact that 17 came forward with their barrows in such unfavourable conditions says a good deal for their hardiness. Soon mud began to bespatter the runners. Tom Nunn took the lead in the outward journey but was finally beaten by Sam George. CWN 09 12 31

1910 01 07

A novel and very popular experiment has just been tried in a Cambridge elementary school. The infants have been receiving direction in the gentle art of plum pudding making and just before Christmas were invited to bring their small coins towards buying the ingredients for the manufacture of some real puddings 'all on their own'. Six were made and a grand feast was held. The children arrived with clean faces and hands and provided with spoons and plates or pieces of clean paper. Then amid tremendous excitement the steaming hot puddings were dished up, decorated and served round the impatient youngsters who speedily put every scrap out of sight. CWN 10 01 07h

1910 01 21

Exciting occurrences at Kingston on Boxing Day had their sequel in the police court. A village labourer was summonsed for refusing to quit the Rose and Crown public house and for assaulting the landlady's daughter by punching her nose. The landlord was summonsed for assaulting the labourer's mother who had held the door of the public house to prevent her son from returning. Defendant said "I was drunk and everybody else in the house was drunk except the landlady's daughters. The landlord was drunk, and his wife was drunk, and I was drunk, and we all got together". Both were fined CEN 10 01 21b

1910 12 16

Messrs A.M. Robinson held their Christmas sale as usual at the Cattle Market. Amongst the prize-winners was Mr C. Butler of Swaffham Bulbeck whose five pigs were purchased by J. Prior, butcher of Burleigh Street. There was a fine show of hogs over ten stone which was won by W.A. Payne of Fulbourn with a special prize awarded to E. Gautrey of Cottenham. Mr Backler of Linton won in the sow class while Miss Camps of Chesterton was best in the cottagers' section, her hog being sold to Eastmans 10 12 16a

1910 12 23

At Boxworth the Squire, Mr Arthur Thornhill, with his usual liberality, distributed tickets for Christmas cheer to each householder on his estate. The Christmas charities, coal and money were given out in the schoolroom according to the discretion of the trustees and Mrs A. Kirke Smith also gave tea and sugar to all over 60 years in the parish as usual. At an entertainment in the schoolroom Mr G. Hills of Swavesey amused the audience with comic ditties and his banjo. 10 12 23g

1910 12 20

Costers' Marathon on Boxing Day – 10 12 30c

1911 01 14

On 'The Squire's annual tea party' the children of the Sawston Girls' Boy' and Infants' schools, numbering about 270, were given an half-day's holiday. This enabled the caterers to have one of the large schools cleared of its desks and replaced by three long rows of tables. At the Infant's School the little tots sat at their dual desks, their eyes sparkling as they beheld a huge Christmas tree laden will dolls, picture books and a variety of toys. Then they were entertained to a sumptuous tea, followed by an evening's entertainment. Afterward three cheers were given to Mr & Mrs Huddleston for their kindness. 11 01 14ggg

1911 12 22

During the week 274 persons have been supplied by the Mayor's soup kitchen and 73 gallons of soup, nine lbs of dripping and six stone of bread have been distributed. Meat, bones etc have been received from Mr W. Robinson of Bene't Street and other butchers, while G.H. French of East Road has given pea flour and Mr Wallis of Haslingfield, swedes. The sale of bone has realised one shilling and tenpence. The mayor has promised to distribute oranges today and Mrs Prior, Furniss Lodge, has kindly promised 150 mince pies. 11 12 22a

1911 12 29

Christmas had not passed without a tragedy as the body of a woman was taken from the river at the Fort St George. She'd gone into Cambridge to fetch a plum pudding from a friend who gave her one every year, and to collect a parcel from the Ickleton carrier. Then she'd met her daughter, a wardmaid at Addenbrooke's Hospital. It is thought she was going home with her parcel along the towing path when she slipped into the water – it was a very dark night – and drowned. Her body was caught on the bottom chain of Walter Pauley's ferry. Thomas Reuben Hart, photographer, of 53 Humberstone Road, applied artificial respiration as an ambulance man

1912 12 21

Christmas of 1912 promises to be as happy as any of its predecessors. The complaint of 'low wages and high prices' is heard in many quarters but evidence of material prosperity is afforded by the increased bulk of trade. Cambridge tradesmen have seldom shown such enterprise in regard to the stock exhibited and their reward promises to be forthcoming in the hearty response of shoppers. The football match on the Town grounds on Christmas Day is sure to prove a great attraction and the 'Barnwell Derby' race for costermongers pushing their barrows from Cambridge to Bottisham Swan will take place on Boxing Day 12 12 21c

1913 01 03

This has been one of the quietest and dullest Christmases ever known in Gt Gransden. It practically rained all the week. Two football matches were played on Christmas Day and Boxing Day against Everton and Sandy Reserves but the state of the ground made it more a matter of luck than play. The usual services were held in the parish church, which was nicely decorated. The carol singers paraded the village at midnight on Christmas Even and again on Christmas Day. No fewer than six Canadians have returned home to spend Christmas in their native village

Histon Christmas business at post office – 2,000 letters received

Swavesey Swan Pond – 13 01 03c – not in CIP

1913 01 03

Soham. The question of where to spend a pleasant evening in Soham has been solved by Messrs Taylor who have opened a new picture hall in Red Lion Square. A large outbuilding has been converted into a comfortable and spacious hall with seating for 250 and standing for 100 more. For three nights each week an excellent programme of first-class pictures will be shown. The opening performance was given on Boxing Day. The cinema apparatus, which is of the latest pattern, is contained in a fire-proof room at the rear of the hall

1913 12 05

Autograph Christmas cards with Judge's real photographic views of Cambridge 13 12 05 p5 CIP

1913 12 26

Thirty-five Cambridge children received useful Christmas gifts at the police station when the first distribution of boots this winter took place. Some of the children looked on the police as austere men and refrained from doing anything wrong when they saw a constable. But a policeman was a man, and in many cases a father with a sympathy and love for children. The boots were purchased through collections at concerts and musical entertainments. They would hopefully be a first-rate fit so children could have a good rollicking time in the snow. 13 12 26 p3

1913 12 26

The Cambridge Society for the Blind held a Christmas party for 30 blind men and women with the friends who bought them.

1913 12 30

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1914 01 02

A shocking fatality occurred in the early hours of Christmas morning on the road between Great Wilbraham and Fulbourn. A driver for the Provincial Motor Cab Company overturned the taxicab he

was driving and was pinned underneath in his seat, sustaining fatal injuries to his head. The accident occurred about one o'clock in the morning and he lay in the road until found by the Wilbraham mail driver at 6.40. The car was badly knocked about. The offside front wheel was broken completely and thrown several yards up the road. 14 01 02 & a
Hauxton Christmas festivities - 14 01 02e

1914 01 02

There were animated scenes along the road between Cambridge and Bottisham on Boxing Day when the annual Costers' Marathon took place. A big crowd saw the 14 competitors start from Abbey Street. They had to travel to Bottisham and back, a distance of 11 miles, pushing a coster's barrow before them. Ben Warren led practically all the way covering the distance to Bottisham rapidly, but facing the wind on the return leg left all competitors severely tired. Most finished and received half-a-crown. 14 01 02c pic 14 01 02d

1914 10 30

The Costermongers Marathon will be held as usual on Boxing Day. Distress was greater this winter on account of the war and the substantial money prizes would be especially welcome. A suggestion that the soldiers lying in Cambridge should be invited to compete was deferred as was another that the funds collected should be allocated to Addenbrooke's Hospital and the Belgian Refugees Fund.

1914 11 13

Cyril Wright of Chesterton Road, a motor cyclist attached to the 1st Cavalry Division writes to his mother: Christmas is getting nearer and the war has not ended yet. I don't think it will last very much longer because of the terrible slaughter going on. I was in a village when the Germans opened a heavy artillery barrage, blowing the houses up as if they were made of putty. I was completely cut off so ran into a trench and had to stop there ten hours. After dark I crawled out under heavy rifle fire to my motor cycle only to find it smothered with broken glass and bricks. I was glad to get out of it.
Mrs Marcus Dimsdale's chauffeur meets her sister

1914 12 25

In accordance with custom the widows of Haddenham made their house-to-house call on St Thomas' Day to receive their contributions. Several years ago there were upwards of 70, this year only 22 made their appearance. The youngest was 30 and the oldest 50. Notwithstanding age the senior old lady managed the tramp through the village with as much vigour as the younger ones. It is gratifying to know that this mark of respect paid to the needy poor has not fallen off

1914 12 25

Christmas at Cambridge promises to be the quietest ever known, with the shadow of war hanging over the land. But everything possible will be done to brighten the lot of the wounded soldiers at the Military Hospital. On Christmas Eve carols will be sung in the recreation room. The distribution of Princess Mary's gifts will take place next morning and a turkey and plum pudding served. The 180 nurses will have their Christmas dinner in the recreation room in the evening. At the Belgian's Rest House on Hills Road presents will be distributed to all men but the public are asked to refrain from treating the soldiers to alcoholic liquors. They are suffering from wounds and even a small quantity of alcohol will retard recovery

1916 12 27

Christmas Railway traffic. — Altogether this year the Christmas traffic on the G.E.R. has been slacker than usual at Cambridge. There was, in the early part of last week, a good deal of passenger traffic, particularly among munition workers and soldiers. The general public, evidently responding to the appeal made to them, did not travel as in previous years. The extra trains on Sunday, however, were well filled. There were fewer passengers than usual, and the pressure on this department therefore was not so great as in previous years.

1919 01 01

Busy Day for the Mayor, — The Mayor of Cambridge (Mr. Ralph Starr) had a busy day on Christmas Day, when, in company with the Mayoress and their son and daughter, they paid visits to most of the institutions in the town, including the Borough Sanatorium, the Children's Home in Ross St. the Workhouse, Mill Road, the 1st Eastern General Hospital, York House, Newmarket Road, which is the Children's Home of the Chesterton Union and (in the afternoon) Addenbrooke's Hospital. At the hospital, the Mayor visited every ward, speaking kindly words of greeting and comfort to the patients, finishing up at the soldiers' (Bowtell) ward. This visit concluded the Mayor's programme and he returned home for a well-earned rest after what he described as a happy and pleasing experience.

1919 01 01

Boxing Day cross country run – photo feature – 19 01 01

1919 12 31

A Real Peace Christmas, — Quite the old Christmas spirit — absent during the terrible years of war — seemed to prevail everywhere this Yuletide, our first real Peace Christmas for five years. The only noticeable change from pre-war festivals was the dwindling popularity of Christmas cards, small gifts apparently taking their place. Another feature was the exceptionally large number of carol parties who went round this Christmas collecting on behalf of benevolent and philanthropic objects. Most church choirs organised parties and the response met was most generous and encouraging. More than ever, the festive season appealed to the children. It was the first Christmas upon, which many had had their fathers home with them during the period since the war broke out. The delights of Christmas shopping, or the rollicking Christmas parties, and of Boxing Day visits, were never the same when "daddy was away," and with him home again everything tended to make the present occasion the happiest of their lives.

1920 12 29

Children's Christmas Toy and Present Fund, Eden Street distributes gifts poor children – photo – 20 12 29b

1922 12 18

Christmas in the shops. Messrs E.T. Saint & co., the well-known automobile engineers of the Hyde Park Corner Garage, Cambridge, are proud of the facts that as agents for the "Sirrah" motor cycle they are able to place within the reach of the Cambridge public a real motor cycle at a cost of 25 guineas. In the way of cars their agencies include the popular 10 h.p. Swift 4-seater at £275

1922 12 22

"Christmas comes but once a year, but when it comes it brings good cheer". Subscribers to the Unemployed Christmas Fund, had they paid a visit to the Labour Exchange, Regent-street, Cambridge, could have had no doubt that the Christmas message they have sent out to the Cambridge unemployed will bring gladness and some measure of seasonable cheer to many homes which would otherwise be devoid of it. Each man received a 5s. voucher for himself, a similar one in respect of his wife and a half-crown voucher in respect of each child. The vouchers were available for the purchase of coal, bread, meat, milk or provisions. There were also special pink vouchers in respect of kindly offers by tradesmen to supply groceries, meat, flour etc. up to a given amount. One man was given vouchers for himself and seven children.

1922 12 27

Windy, showery and in every way uncongenial weather fell to the lot of Cambridge on Christmas Day. No matter how hard the wind blew or how hard the rain beat down it was impossible to mar the festive season, for those who wished to stay at home did so and felt all the snugger. In the early part of the day there was a wonderful amount of traffic on the main roads leading from the town, tending to show that the stay-at-home Christmas is not so popular as it is sometimes supposed to be. Few outside attractions were attempted on Christmas Day, but in the realm of sport much interest was shown in the

visit to the town of the Racing Club de Paris, who met the Town Football Club before a crowd approaching 4,000. Those wishing to see a football match further afield had the opportunity of doing so, for the G.E.R. ran an excursion train to Tottenham

1922 12 27

If a crowd of supremely happy kiddies be a cure for the "blues" anyone suffering that way would have done well to visit the Central School, Cambridge, when a further party of the 3,000 poor and needy children were given tea, a sight of the Mayor in his red robes, four pantomime horses, and a really good entertainment. The noise - well it is really indescribable. Any policemen directing strangers to the schools need only have said "Hear that noise? Well that's it". Two of the young ladies appearing in the pantomime "Cinderella" at the New Theatre kindly volunteered their services for the tea and following them came the four little ponies which draw Cinderella's coach to the ball

1922 12 29

If you want to pay a visit to Fairyland, and you doubtless do whatever your age, pay a visit to the A.D.C. Theatre, Cambridge, where you can spend an afternoon or evening in the land of Make-believe. Mrs Pearl Lambeth's annual productions are always eagerly looked forward to and we have never been disappointed. This year there are two fairy pantomimes, "The Magic Horse Shoe" and "The Making of a Snow Queen"

1923 12 12

A Cambridge cycle agent and gramophone dealer who started in business without any previous experience appeared before the bankruptcy court. He had commenced business at Abbey Walk although never apprenticed to the cycle trade as he had always had an inclination that way. He also took up the gramophone and record business in which he had no experience, but he thought there was money in it. He estimated his turnover at about £10 a week. He lost about £40 on Christmas toys by over-stocking and £67 on the fall in bicycle prices

1925 12 28

Well, Christmas had come and gone again and all that remains are the parties and indigestion. Christmas isn't like it used to be. It never was. With the world changing so quickly it would be surprising if, outwardly at any rate, Christmas did not change with it. But although nature may not give us what the Christmas card designers have led us to believe was the traditional Yuletide weather, what is more important is that the Spirit of Christmas is still with us and is indeed stronger than ever. On Christmas Day the football match between Cambridge Town and Thurrock was witnessed by a crowd of about 1,500

1925 12 28

The many hundreds of people who crowded Market Hill to see the meet of the Cambridgeshire Hunt on Boxing Day morning will have an opportunity of trying to pick themselves out in a special film at the Victoria Cinema. The photography is extraordinarily good and the picturesque scene well depicted. The spectator gets good views of various sections of the crowds and the huntsmen are seen partaking of the refreshments supplied by the Mayor. Later as the Hunt moves off we see them in King's Parade.

1926 12 04

Cambridge people who have relatives abroad will be interested in the scheme for sending Christmas cards by cable which is being "pushed" this year. Originally inaugurated by the Eastern Telegraph Company they are now becoming the rule. Greetings may be sent to South Africa, Australia, China, Japan and South America. The minimum charges are for messages of ten words, the rate being 5s to Australia. The telegrams will be delivered on seasonably-designed forms.

1926 12 16

It may not be generally known to the Cambridge public that Mr Carne, the manager of the Playhouse, Mill Road, is the "Victor Carne" who figures in the record list of the Vocalion Gramophone Co. He has recorded "The Holy City" and "The Star of Bethlehem" for their Christmas list and these and other of his records are obtainable at Messrs Leavis's, Regent Street. Wireless enthusiasts will no doubt remember the many times he has sung from London and Daventry.

1926 12 28

Christmas Day and the two following days will be fully occupied in the good old-fashioned way; then will come the reaction and the question will arise, what to do with the children. Pearl Lambeth will help to solve that problem by presenting her annual children's' pantomime, "Betty and the Fairies", at Cambridge Guildhall together with a spectacular ballet and a good old harlequinade to follow. The programme certainly looks attractive and it is hoped that Cambridge will accord her bumper houses as a reward for her enterprise.

1926 12 29

Expectations of a white Yuletide were not realised this Christmas. The weather Harlequin at the last minute performed one of his celebrated quick-change acts and brought a sulky drizzle which lasted all day. The visit of the Helder football team from Holland proved a considerable attraction to the Town ground on Christmas morning and there was a fair attendance at the local Derby between the Abbey and the Swifts. Apart from this there was little to tempt folk abroad and happy family gatherings round the home fire, fortunately replenished since the resumption of work in the coal mines, were the order of the day. 1926 12 29

1927 01 01

The Agricultural Wages Committee met to receive objections to the reduction of the minimum wage of special classes of workers under 18 years of age from 30s to 27s a week for the customary hours for men employed as horsemen, cowmen or shepherds, and limiting the minimum wages of 12s provided for boys under 15 years to boys of 14. The committee could extend the definition of overtime to include work on particular days. This had been done in the case of special workers in glasshouses in Hertfordshire where all work after 12 o'clock on Christmas Day was treated as overtime. 1927 01 01

1927 12 14

The Christmas holidays passed off very pleasantly in Cambridge and the great majority of workers no doubt appreciated to the full the four days' respite from their labours. But the arrangements with regard to closing on Tuesday were far from satisfactory, the multiple shops being the main cause of trouble. For traders who deal in perishable goods the problem is difficult and some did not see their way to agree to the fourth day. With such confusion it was hardly to be expected that any considerable section of the public would go shopping on Tuesday and it is doubtful if those who did reopen then found it really worthwhile. 1927 12 24

1927 12 27

Thousands of bottles of old ale, specially brewed for Trinity College and matured in the college cellars, have been sent this Christmas to Cambridge men all over the country. Trinity Audit Ale is declared by brewers to be the finest known. Every year there is a big demand for it, but not a bottle is allowed to be sold to the public and only present and past members of the college are allowed to buy it. The ale is matured for two years before it is sold and treated with all the care of an old wine. The recipe of the drink, which until fairly recently was brewed in the college itself, is kept a secret 1927 12 27

1927 12 27

Christmas in Cambridge was of the good, old-fashioned sort. A dreary, drizzly, cold and miry Christmas Eve gave way to a fine rain which gradually changed to sleet and the wind began to rumble hollowly in the chimneys. About noon a few snowflakes made their appearance and by two o'clock

the snow came swirling down, the air was filled with large flakes and the outer world was whitening rapidly. Every tree and shrub was a picture of wintry beauty and many of the eaves of the houses carried a fringe of slowly-dripping icicles. 1927 12 27

1928 07 31

Many of the main roads in the county were blocked with snowdrifts from six to ten feet deep over Christmas. Trains, motor buses and cars were held up and travellers stranded. The wheels of the mail vans were equipped with chains with the result that hold-ups were uncommon, though one van on the Histon – Milton road had to be dug out. A thatched cottage at Melbourn collapsed about seven o'clock in Sunday evening. The bedroom end of the house fell out, but, happily, Mrs Greig was in the bottom room and escaped injury. She would not move however until the policeman came on Monday morning. She is now living in a cottage just opposite.

1928 12 24

The benevolent spirit of Christmas descended upon Cambridge Police Station when 350 of the city's poorest families received good cheer at the annual distribution under the Police Poor and Needy Fund scheme. "Robert" again proved what a real good friend to the poor he can be. He relished his job of amateur shopkeeper, skilfully wielding the butcher's knife and shovelling potatoes into sacks with good-natured gusto. With a cheery word for every recipient he sent happy families away loaded with Christmas dinners and good things in general. Perambulators which had arrived empty were wheeled away bearing protuberant sacks.

1928 12 27

There was no place in Cambridge where greater efforts were made to bring about a happy Christmas than at the Poor Law Institution, Mill Road. Gone forever were the old traditions of Bumbledom and the hardships associated with the workhouse regime. Enthusiastic spirits and untiring hands had transformed this already 'rejuvenated' building into a place which re-echoed in every corner to the joyous note of Yuletide happiness. The vestibules were almost as gaily decorated as the wards, festoons and balloons meeting the eye in every direction. A novel feature was the use of Flanders poppies, given by the British Legion. Santa Claus arrived in a sleigh drawn by two Alsatians; strangely enough the Master was not to be found when Santa arrived.

1929 11 09

Every Christmas brings its novelties and now comes the 'Talkie' Christmas cards which Messrs Raphael Tuck have issued. Each card contains a small gramophone record which will convey to the recipient a suitable greeting. There are a variety of records, some with bells, others with carols but all with a spoken message. There is only one further development needed to make them absolutely perfect: an arrangement that will enable anyone to make and send a record of his own voice.

1929 12 23

"How many in your family?" "Eleven". With a happy swing of his spade a stalwart policeman dug deeply into the mountain of potatoes before him and a couple of shovelfuls went tumbling into a capacious sack. A wan-looking little woman smiled gratefully, lifted the sack into a perambulator and passed on. She was one of the 200 who received Christmas cheer at the Cambridge Police Poor and Needy Fund distribution. Each received a parcel containing a piece of English beef, flour, raisins, tea, sugar, margarine, nuts, oranges and milk.

1930 09 26

The Master of Clare College told librarians that a wealthy member of the college had made a benefaction on condition that his bones were preserved above ground. His body was put in a cupboard above the Hall. But undergraduates came to know of this and took away various bones as mementoes. The college replaced them with other bones so that skeleton remained more or less complete. But on Christmas Eve the ghost of the benefactor visits various undergraduate rooms gathering in his scattered parts. 30 09 26f

1930 12 12

Today the CDN publishes a 16-page paper for the first time in its 42-years' history. This is because of the demands on our space by national and local advertisers for their Christmas shopping announcements and affords evidence of their confidence of the paper as an advertising medium. There is an enormous response each day to our Christmas Pages Advertisement Competition. 30 12 12a

1930 12 20

Cambridge people can now send their Christmas greetings by picture telegraphy – at a price. They must post their picture telegram direct to the Central Telegraph Office at a cost of £1 for the minimum size picture of 15 square inches up to 70 square inches for which the charge is £4 13s 6d. 30 12 20c

1930 12 27

The booking hall at Cambridge railway station was the scene on Christmas Eve of one of the most extraordinary happenings ever witnessed. As a taxicab was being driven back to the station rank its driver suffered a seizure; the vehicle careered through the booking hall entrance and crashed into the collapsible iron gates near the ticket collector's box. If the barrier had been wide open it would have gone right on to the track, and a train was just due. 30 12 27

1931 01 02

Christmas Day festivities at the Home of Mercy in Christchurch Street, Cambridge were spent in the usual manner. The chapel was decorated with lilies and carnations presented by two of the married girls as a mark of appreciation. Everyone attended Christ Church at 7 and 11 am and then enjoyed a bountiful dinner. Each girl found in her pudding a piece of money which is to be presented to Addenbrooke's Hospital building fund. Evensong was sung in chapel after which a pantomime (on the wireless) was enjoyed until the day came to a close at 9.30. 31 01 02e

1931 11 13

The decision of the Theatres Committee not to allow Soham Electric cinema to open on Christmas Day is 'almost tyrannical', one councillor claimed. The public would have a perfectly free choice whether to patronise it or not. It was better than loafing about street corners or drinking in pubs. Some of the pictures were worth seeing, even at Soham. But family circles would be broken and the one meeting in the year would be destroyed. The council agreed that the cinema should be allowed to open. 31 11 13e

1932 12 16

The Post Office says every effort will be made to deliver by Christmas day all parcels, packets and newspapers for distant places posted not later than the 22nd December and all letters and cards posted by 23rd December. The latest time of posting for letters and cards for local delivery and in towns within 30 miles radius will be 6pm on Christmas Eve. There will be one delivery of letters and parcels on Christmas Day. 32 12 16c

1932 12 30

Cambridge enjoyed a quiet Noel this year. In the children's wards of Addenbrooke's Hospital the spirit of Christmas had most play. The three rooms were decorated to represent Alice in Wonderland, Peter Pan and the Old Woman Who Lived in a Shoe. The shoe was kindly lent by Messrs Joshua Taylor. Every child had a nursery rhyme quilt on their bed and their stocking were filled, the night Sister playing Santa Claus. 32 12 30a & b

1932 12 30

As Christmas Day fell on a Sunday, the whole of the festive side of the celebrations at the County Infirmary, including the Christmas dinner, were postponed for a day and the Mayor's official visit was not made. All the passages, wards and rooms were bedecked with paper flowers and evergreens, electric lights were hidden in lanterns and poppies hung along the walls. Celebrations were also

delayed at the Church Army Hostel but presents of a good shirt, ounce of tobacco and packet of cigarettes were distributed on Christmas morning. 32 12 30a & b

1933 12 18

A happy, vociferous and altogether exuberant crowd of youngsters packed into the Cambridge Guildhall for the News' Robin Fellowship's Christmas entertainment. The main hall and gallery were filled and some seats behind the orchestra had to be brought into use. The Mayor called for the grand "Tweet, Tweet" and expressed hearty congratulations to the Fellowship on having nearly 10,000 members and for the wonderful way they were keeping the Robin Cot going at Addenbrooke's Hospital. 33 12 18

1933 12 19

Seward's End Farm was gutted after fire broke out in an unoccupied bedroom where bedding was being aired in preparation for the use of the room by Christmas guests. Mr & Mrs Reeve tried to put it out with buckets of water while their son biked to the Post Office from which the Saffron Walden Brigade was called. Firemen had to break ice on the pond to get water but this soon ran out and they had to send an SOS to Walden for water which had to be especially pumped. Only then were they able to make any progress against the flames. 33 12 19

1933 12 27

The two dozen kiddies confined to the Mill Road Isolation Hospital for Christmas found a keen and energetic staff to brighten up the holiday. Balloons, paper decorations, flags and mistletoe were to be seen in profusion and the girls' ward contained a huge Christmas tree sparkling with fancy ornaments and tinsel. At the Union Road Institution there was breakfast of sausages and dinner of roast pork, beef and mutton with sprouts, parsnips and potatoes followed by Christmas pudding and custard. Fruit, tobacco, beer and lemonade were also provided and afterwards the inmates listened to the King's speech on the wireless. 33 12 27

1933 12 28

In accordance with custom the Isle of Ely Coursing Club held a Boxing Day meeting at Stretham by permission of the President, Sir Frederick Hiam. Weather conditions were bad, rain falling continuously throughout the day, but this did not upset the usual enthusiasts. Hares were rather slow in breaking cover but there was some splendid sport, though 'the going' was a trifle heavy. 33 12 28

1934 02 20

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The misconduct of spectators at a Huntingdon Town football on Christmas day has resulted in the ground being closed for a fortnight. 34 02 20

1935 12 17

Electricity is the modern housewife's Father Christmas, bringing her so many labour-saving and home-brightening devices and Messrs Bailey, Grundy and Barrett of St Mary's Passage are specialists. Lamp standards, wireless sets and coffee percolators are a few gift suggestions. Harassed husbands and flurried fiancés will find solutions to all their gift problems at Messrs Eaden Lilley's which is packed full of things dear to the feminine heart such as evening gowns, furs and lingerie. The bargain basement has good quality stuff at reasonable prices. 35 12 17a

1936 01 07

"This coupon'll win us a thousand pounds" jokingly prophesied a Cambridge man to his wife on Christmas day after he had filled in his football pool form while she had a glass of port with a friend. And no one was more surprised than he when his forecast came true. The lucky man, Mr 'Dick'

Morgan of Cambridge Place, was at work when a CDN reporter brought definite news of his success. He had not heard the wireless announcement as the accumulator of his set had run out. 36 01 07

1936 07 23

The deeds of Bassingbourn Recreation Ground were handed over to the Parish Council as a perpetual playing field for the village. The generous gift was made by Samuel Willmott of Muswell Hill who was born in the village when there was no tennis courts, the cricket wickets were two sticks with a coat thrown over them and at Christmas they played hockey using a large brewers' bung for a ball. He also erected handsome entrance gates at the South End road entrance carrying the words "Willmott's Playing Field" in large letters 36 07 23a

1936 11 28

The Truevoice Recording Studio in Jesus Lane is now open every day for the producing of gramophone records. Your opportunity to hear yourself on a perfect 10 inch double sided wax record for a fee of 10/6. Children's voices faithfully reproduced. Specially equipped studio for music and orchestral recordings. These records make ideal Christmas Gifts to your friends. Why not make one and send it to them. They will be delighted – Advert. 36 11 28b

1936 12 28

Christmas Day dawned dreary and dismal but everything was bright and happy at the White Ribbon Hostel. It was beautifully decorated and the crackling of huge fires re-echoed the old-fashioned Christmas spirit. On Boxing Day an old gentleman said, with tears in his eyes, "It was the happiest day I've had since I started 'on the road', and the gifts of socks, ties and handkerchiefs were appreciated by us all" 36 12 28a

1936 12 28

Christmas in Sanatorium Mill Road, Church Army work aid home, Harvey Goodwin Home, District Nurses' Home – 36 12 28

1936 12 29

Thaxted Christmas Morris Dancers – 36 12 29a

1937 04 22

A lady who inherited a considerable fortune some 10 years ago and had since resided at Hemingford Grey appeared at Cambridge Bankruptcy Court and told how it had disappeared. She had bought Pear Tree Cottage and been generous in entertaining the people of the village, giving them all a party and dance every year for seven years. She had also given the children a Christmas party. This cost a considerable sum. She kept a stud of beautiful dogs but in November 1932 she had a considerable fire, losing a lot of valuable old china. She lived extravagantly with an expensive wardrobe, including a fur coat. But she never spent the money on cocktails or drink. 37 04 22a & b

1937 12 08

Dear Ladies. Let me help you to choose a Christmas Gift for your menfolk. How about a shirt? I can show you excellent ranges in neat stripes and plain shades with two collars to match. Is your man warm and cosy at night? If not, let me suggest a suit of woollen Pyjamas. Is he in a hurry? How about a 'Corby' stretcher press so he can start the day immaculate with perfectly creased trousers. I remain, always at your service, S. Phillips, head salesman, shirt and hosiery department, Johnsons, 51 Sidney Street, Cambridge – Advertisement 37 12 08b

1937 12 24

Fellowship House toy distribution, which has taken place about Christmas-time for the last five years, came to an end after a very strenuous week. Altogether nearly 1,300 bags were distributed to the children of all unemployment men whose addresses were obtained from the Employment Exchange. Each bag contained an old toy, a new toy, a book, orange and bag of sweets and were delivered by

private cars. Then as a 'Grand Finale' some 1,400 children were given a free film entertainment at the Victoria Cinema. 37 12 24 # c.39

1937 12 22

"Mr Clark", the canary that called 'Time!' at the Spread Eagle, Lensfield Road, was suffocated to death by smoke when fire broke out in the saloon bar. He had been an affectionately regarded inhabitant of the pub for some eight years. His almost human intelligence made his cage hanging from the bar ceiling a frequent centre of attraction. The bird was alive when rescued but although given brandy was too overcome by smoke to recover. The fire was caused by Christmas decorations accidentally catching fire 37 12 22b

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1937 12 28

Mill Road Infirmary, Harvey Goodwin Home, Mill Road Sanatorium, Church Army Home, Union Lane Institution 37 12 28a

1937 12 29

Coursing at Streatham on Boxing Day – 37 12 29b

1938 04 22

Mrs Ethel Robinson, described as "Hinxton's Lady Bountiful" has died. She came to live with her husband at Hinxton Hall in 1917 and took an active interest in village life, being connected with the Mothers' Union and Women's Conservative Association. Every Christmas she entertained the children at the Hall and extended similar hospitality to the old folk in the New Year. She ran a clothing and coal club and was a willing supporter of anything which had as its object the benefit of the village. 38 04 22b funeral 38 04 26

1938 11 29

Eaden Lilley's 'Toyland' department has toys of all kinds, sizes and prices and for sixpence the young visitor can pay a trip in the Flying Comet to the Land of the Midnight Sun and (perhaps more important) Father Christmas. There is a range of Meccano and Hornby products together with the Mickey Mouse Circus Train. Dinky toys, marionettes worked by hand and outfits to transform the wearer into a bus conductor or soldier are obtainable from a shilling upwards. Games including the still popular 'Monopoly', its successor 'Totopoly' and home cinemas are a strong feature 38 11 29a

1938 11 29

Gift ideas. New fashion gloves in rich suede, fine glace kidskin, pigskins, calfskin ... all beautifully styled. Classic shortie, gauntlet, costume types – George Stace, Petty Cury. British made sewing machines and stainless bread knives – A. Macintosh, Market Place. Private Christmas cards; sample book sent to your home for inspection. Autograph cards from 6d per box – Harry Johnson & Nephew, St Andrew's Street. The popular G.E.C. electric cleaner will be welcomed because its period of service extends far beyond the festive season; £8.15.0 cash or 8/6 a month – Allin's, Sidney Street. – Adverts 38 11 29a

1938 12 17

The Christmas dinner of No.37 Squadron, 'B' Flight Feltwell was held at the White Lion Hotel, Newmarket. The menu contained tasty dishes described as Crankshaft cocktail and lead punch,

filleted pistols and filings, roast rocker boxes and force feed baloney. Speeches were practically non-existent. Wing-Commander Fogarty said a squadron badge had been suggested; it was a candle burning at each end - as they flew by day and night. There were Air Force 'games' and the conviviality of the evening left nothing to be desired 38 12 17a

1938 12 22

It was a custom in Cambridgeshire for labourers to drag a Yule log into the manor to the accompaniment of singing and to place with the new log a charred piece of the log of the previous year to ensure prosperity to the household. There is also a belief that if a piece of the burnt Yule log is kept in the cellar throughout the year it will preserve the house from fire. Boughs of mistletoe hung outside a door to ward off evil. Cottages burn light in window to guide baby Jesus to the dwelling and disk of milk and 'creed' wheat, sweetened with honey or sugar, sometimes laced with rum, was served to all comers. Carol singers with the old violin, concertina or double-bass, farmer throws feather into air to forecast growing conditions, Christmas day dinner, University scholars erected Prince of Misrule, Mumming plays - Stuart-Baker 38 12 22c

1938 12 23

Cambridge Police Poor and Needy Fund ensures many needy families can enjoy a good Christmas dinner and plenty of coal. A large queue formed in Downing Place, young and old, they call carried baskets, jugs and sacks – even pillow slips. A huge pile of potatoes was in one corner and milk was handed out from churns together with butter, tea and cartons of peas. The Police Santa Claus No.1 (the Chief Constable) chatted with people as they came in. Then came a Distribution Day lunch of roast beef and Christmas pudding in the police station. 38 12 23

1938 12 27

Two tramps broke windows to spend Christmas in gaol – 38 12 27

1938 12 28

Christmas Day at Victoria Friendly Societies' institution, Home of Mercy, Harvey Goodwin Home, Cottage Home for orphans – 38 12 28

1939 12 27

War could not 'black-out' the Christmas Eve Festival of nine lessons and carols at King's. From the crowded chapel the message of peace and goodwill travelled by wireless across Europe to France, Italy and Switzerland. The candles flickered even after black-out for a test showed no dangerous amount of light could be seen from outside. But there were dark, blank spaces among the rich glory of the stained windows which told of the removal of some of the glass for safety's sake. 39 12 27a

1939 12 29

Golden Wedding.—Mr. and Mrs. James Wilson, of 79, High Street, Chesterton, celebrated their golden wedding on Christmas Day. Christmas was Different. — Christmas, 1939, has meant more solemn thoughts than usual for many. In countless homes, the traditional joy and gaiety has been tempered by absence of one or more members of the family. And yet, in spite of gaps at the dinner table, and because the advice to carry on as usual is so obviously sound, there has been little outward change in the character of the Christmas festival. In Cambridge, as elsewhere, people remembered their absent ones, but through the inspiring co-operation of the radio, were able to satisfy themselves that the men in the Services were not forgotten. At home, it was the usual day of gifts—the children's day—and for many the delight lay in entertaining little evacuees whose parents were unable to do the job themselves. The change in the times was reflected, perhaps, in the opening of some cinemas on Christmas day, but found themselves comparatively few patrons; it was still a home festival for most. The Town club had their usual football fixture in the morning, but this had to be scratched. On Boxing Day their fixture with Rushden resulted in a decisive win for Cambridge. Another regular feature was the appearance of the Christmas Day bathers, who found not thick ice, but a deep fog to greet them.

1939 12 29

Party.—A section of Popham Road, Tottenham, evacuated school held a successful children's Christmas party in the Church schoolroom (Cottenham). The party opened with community singing, followed by some exciting games. Meanwhile the tables had been gaily decorated by a willing band of helpers, and amidst great hilarity, the children donned paper hats, pulled crackers, and sat down to a sumptuous tea prepared by Mr. J. Sherrer. After tea, all eyes were turned towards the giant Christmas tree, laden with presents, distributed later by a youthful Father Christmas

1940 12 20

The Christmas Turkey. — Although authorities seem to be agreed (writes Watchman) about the date of the coming of the first turkey to England (it was during the reign of King Henry VIII) its place of origin is still a question often debated in certain quarters. The popular belief is that the bird was brought from Turkey, hence its name, but there appears to be strong evidence of its coming originally from the wilds extending from the South of Canada to Mexico, where it is, even today, the most plentiful. For generations large number of the bird have been bred and fattened, mainly in Cambridgeshire and Norfolk, to supply the London markets. Some old farm accounts of 146 years ago discovered and deciphered by Dr. W. M. Palmer, tell of 1,700 dead turkeys being carted along the Royston Road to London on a Sunday before the Christmas Day of 1793 the birds — all from one farm — weighed in all 9 tons 2 cwts, and were valued at £680. They were followed on the following Monday and Tuesday by 850 from another farm.

1940 12 27

Busy Day for Mayor. — The war seemed to bring but little change in the Christmas activities in the various institutions in Cambridge. Turkeys were for the most part absent from the Christmas Day dinner menu, while for obvious reasons profuse paper decorations were avoided. Almost all the other attributes of the season — plum puddings, mince pies, crackers and of course, Father Christmas himself — were, however to be found and at several places cooks had done wonders in the way of producing Christmas cakes, often with icing. As usual, the Mayor and Mayoress (Ald. and Mrs. Brown) made the traditional long round of visits and in addition to the usual places of call, found time to call at the W.V.S. Services Club in St. Andrew's Street, where they saw some typical hospitality being enjoyed to the full.

1942 12 28

Was 'austerity' Christmas - festivities – Ross St children's home, District Nurses Home, Church Army Hostel, YMCA, Harvey Goodwin Home, WVS – 42 12 28, a American servicemen party for children at Bull Hotel – 42 12 28b

1944 01 01

Christmas broadcasts from Cambridge went well – 44 01 01a

1945 12 21

Welcome home Far East prisoners, Christmas party at Guildhall – 45 12 21

1945 12 27

Christmas morning bathers – includes Jack Overhill – photo – 45 12 27a

Memorable peace-time Christmas – reunions for men who came back – 45 12 27c

1946 01 12

Anglo-American Hospitality Committee wound up' started in 1942 when known that more than 300,000 American airmen would be stationed in East Anglia. Leave hostel established in lecture room over St Andrew's Street Baptist church until the Bull Hotel opened on Nov 4th. By then an information centre – later club – had been opened at the English-Soaking Union at Matthew's Café. Hospitality arranged in colleges and private houses. August 1943 saw first reception at Guildhall to a regiment of Supply Troops; also Christmas Eve party in Guildhall which broadcast. Concentrated on

US Hospital patients and staff of their hospitals. Garden party at Pembroke when Freedom of Cambridge to US Eighth Air Force. – 46 01 12

1947 10 24

A London company secretary who left his Chrysler car on Kings Parade during the night of Christmas Eve and the morning of Christmas day was summonsed for obstruction and for leaving it without lights. PC Tasker spoke of getting a hurricane lamp from the police station & attaching it to the car to warn other traffic. He was fined 10/- in the first case and 20/- in the second 1947 10 24

1947 11 12

Nearly 2,000 old or needy Cambridge people yesterday received gifts of foodstuffs sent from the people of Victoria, Australia. The gifts were many and varied, consisting of Christmas puddings, preserves, canned fruit, dripping, meat products, dried milk, soups, dried fruit, vegetables, cheese and soap. The Agent-General of Victoria said when they discovered we were short of food housewives throughout Australia had queued up to give it to be sent to the people over here. 1947 11 12

1947 11 26

I am assured that people have started Christmas shopping even earlier than usual this year, as they are afraid there will be no toys left at Christmas. Apparently shoppers are not deterred by the prices, for they are buying the expensive lines and big toys. The sort of things being bought are scooters, tricycles and pedal cars, dolls houses (from 30s. to £6.6.0), & sleeping dolls with real hair from Czechoslovakia. A good average for a doll is 50s. and for a teddy bear £3.10.0. Clockwork toys are in great demand, but short supply. Rubber bath toys are back again, at prices like 5s.11d. Novelty crackers are being made once more at prices like 18s.9d

1947 11 26

Cambridge is well used to welcoming Very Important Persons but none is so sure of a vociferous reception from the youngsters as Father Christmas. He was received with traditional acclaim on Saturday when, in the presence of hundreds of youngsters, he arrived at Mitcham's Corner, Chesterton Road. On arrival he proceeded to deliver the goods in the traditional way, leaving his "reindeer coach", climbing up a ladder outside the shop and disappearing down a big chimney. A crowd of children saw him in Nurseryland, surrounded by his friends, the Three Little Pigs, Big Bad Wolf, Pluto, Micky and Minnie Mouse, Donald Duck and others. He will remain in residence until Christmas Eve

1948 01 07

As the Mayoress of Cambridge (Mrs Hickson is the mother of three children) it was very natural that she should take a particular interest in the maternity services at the County Hospital in Mill Road when she paid her Christmas visit there last week. Mrs Hickson had a long talk with the matron (Mrs Ditchburn) who expressed the view that both the young mother of today and her baby are in better condition than she has ever known before. In spite of rationing and the hard times in which we are living the modern woman approaches motherhood with far less apprehension than in pre-war days. Matron pointed out that the extra milk, vitamin tablets and orange juice help to replace the shortages due to rationing

1948 11 22

A very important visitor who every child in Cambridge welcomes with joy, arrived on Saturday. He was none other than Santa Claus. He arrived from Toytown with a well-filled sack to deal with the seasonal requirements of the boys and girls. He was given a royal welcome. There were several hundred children of all ages ranging from tiny tots carried by their mothers, waiting in a state of great expectancy, at his destination, Mitcham's, Chesterton Road. Cheers from waiting children heralded the arrival of the smiling, rosy cheeked Santa and a knot gathered round and followed, Pied-piper fashion, to the foot of the ladder he had to climb up to the chimney before he disappeared down the chimney into Santa's Nurseryland where he will be in residence till Christmas

1948 12 20

Replacing the traditional sound of sleigh bells which usually heralds the arrival of Father Christmas was the roar of an aeroplane engine when the white-bearded, red-robed old gentleman landed at Marshall's airport to attend a Christmas party being held there for children of the reserves on the station. Signalled in by coloured flares the Proctor aircraft circled round the airfield and taxied on to runway where the kiddies were eagerly awaiting him

1948 12 22

Highlight of the Christmas party held for the old people at the Royal Albert Homes was to see themselves on screen in a colour film taken by Mr W. King. Other films included the Queen's visit to Cambridge, various well-known personalities taking their degrees at the Senate House and the Accident Prevention Council's film, "Almost human"

1948 12 23

An unusual display of Christmas cheer amid the austerity of today has attracted considerable attention in Cambridge's Mill Road. On view and on the premises of Messrs Roger Harris and Son, family butchers and poultry dealers, are nearly 1,000 birds - and everyone is spoken for. Every registered customer who wanted a Christmas dinner was catered for, and in addition, a few other customers were lucky enough to place orders. Butcher Harris has made a speciality of Christmas poultry for years and the display represents 18 years of goodwill and business with local poultry-keepers

1948 12 28

A minute or two after midnight on Christmas Eve between 60 and 70 men sat down to what must have been the first Christmas dinner served in Cambridge this year. They were members of the night operating staff at the Telephone Exchange, and they chose that unconventional hour because their periods of duty make it difficult for them to hold a social function at a more normal time. They were served with turkey, plum pudding and mince pies as they sat at their switchboards.

1948 12 29

Cambridge children have rarely been so well catered for with pantomime as they are this year, with two. It seems an excellent idea as it gives a better chance of getting a seat at either one or other. The New Theatre, with "Red Riding Hood" have gone out for a traditional production whereas at the Arts Theatre V.C. Clinton Baddeley's "Cinderella" strikes something of a new note, with the accent on charm, colour and original music.

1948 12 28

Nearly 800 children crowded into the Rex Ballroom to take part in one of Cambridge's gayest Christmas parties. Santa Claus, ice-cream, "pop", cream cakes, novelties, lucky dips and games, all played a part in making this a real children's party. There was also a conjuring show put on by Bartini, as well as a Punch and Judy show by Fred Cross and a cabaret by the Barbara Leader School of Dancing

1949 10 26

To most people our Chief Constable, (Mr B.N. Bebbington) is known only in his professional capacity of guardian of the peace in Cambridge. To many children, however, he is known as a writer of children's' stories. He has published several books and in one of them portrayed animals in a police court scene. The newly published annual "The Christmas Stocking" includes a short tale from his pen and also stories by such writers of distinction as Enid Blyton, Richmal Crompton and Dorothy Sayers.

1949 12 02

Booking opens at the Arts Theatre for the Cyril Fletcher pantomime, "Aladdin" which will be presented on Boxing Day. It is traditional pantomime in the old style with lovely costumes, brilliant

lighting, and Cyril Fletcher as Wishee Washee and Betty Astell as Aladdin. They are well-known through their radio series, through many television programmes and for their West-End appearances

1949 12 23

Sir, I understand there are many homeless married students spending Christmas in Cambridge. As I shall be away I should be very glad to allow them the use of my house in order to enable them to enjoy a country holiday at Christmas. There would be no rent charged, and the only return I ask is that they would feed a few small animals which I would leave behind. My telephone number is Abbots Ripton 77 – N. Burland, Lt Stukeley

1949 12 27

Another Christmas has come and gone. Cambridge like every other town was outwardly quiet in its celebrations, but in each home there was the usual excitement of the early-morning peeps into the Christmas stockings. One of the few people working was the postman, who, with a cheery knock on the door, dropped those last greetings card on the mat. A noticeable and pleasant fact was that the GPO seemed to have held back parcels and letters from abroad so they could be delivered on Christmas morning.

1949 12 27

1700 people crowded into Kings college chapel on Christmas Eve to listen to and take part in the Festival of nine lessons and carols which was being broadcast by the BBC for the 21st successive time. 801 of them were seated in the actual choir, where hundreds of extra seats had been placed right up to the altar. The other 900 sat in the ante-chapel which also had several hundred additional chairs. 3 or 400 more people who formed a queue from the chapel gates to the college entrance were accommodated in the hall, where the service was relayed.

1950 01 10

The Christmas party of the Birdwood Club was held in the Round Church Hall. Founded at the beginning of the last war it extended to British members some of the hospitality so generously extended in Cambridge to those from other nationalities. There was a record attendance of over 200 members of all ages. Thanks to the usual generous pooling of rations and gift parcels from Australia, Canada, Rhodesia and British forces overseas, a bountiful tea was provided.

1950 11 21

Several hundred children stood in Cambridge streets on Saturday gazing with admiring and speculative eyes at Father Christmas as he rode round the town in a lorry from the New Theatre to Mitcham's Corner, where he eventually took up residence at the annual toy fair. Many children ran after him for varying distances, but none was so energetic as one youngster dressed in green who ran after the procession from start to finish – a total time of some 50 minutes. When the procession reached Mitcham's Corner, Father Christmas did his traditional disappearing act of climbing down the chimney of the store.

1950 12 13

What are your chances of finding a pair of nylons in your Christmas stocking? Very slender indeed unless you have your name down at a shop where you are personally known or happen to be on the spot when a supply comes in. There will be no extra supplies for Christmas. Some shopkeepers may have decided several months ago to save from their quotas for Christmas, but that is their own private arrangement

1950 12 26

A BBC microphone hung on a slender thread stretched across King's College chapel on Christmas Eve. Five more stood among the choir stalls and in the ante chapel. At 3 o'clock they each became 'live' to carry the traditional Christmas voice of Cambridge into millions of homes for the 22nd successive year. Inside the chapel were crowded 1,800 people. For the first time since its inauguration

all members of the public who wished to take part in the service were able to gain admittance to the Chapel although 200 late-comers benefited from the relay to the Hall.

1950 12 22

Cambridge has gone one better than flying saucers, for reports have been reaching me indicating that the sky has been pretty full of flying Father Christmases this week. The old man got really up-to-date when he made what may have been his first trip in a helicopter. He had an appointment at a party for the children of the staff of Pest Control. Earlier he had journeyed in a Chipmunk plane to Marshall's Airport where RAF Volunteer Reservists gave a party for their children.

1950

Christmas 1950 – a crisis Christmas someone called it. But whatever the surrounding circumstances it always manages to be an occasion of rest and sociability. In the morning the quiet streets were bathed in the light of a wintry sun. Of course there are always the Christmas Day Spartans who plunge into the icy depths of Sheep's green whatever the weather. There were fourteen braves this year, the youngest being 13-years-old D. Longstaffe.

1951 12 20

Cambridge undergraduates are acting as porters at Cambridge railway station to help cope with the “very heavy” Christmas postal parcel traffic. Temporary porters are paid daily on the basis of £5 10s.6d for a 44-hour week. The Post Office staff handle all letter mails, but only deliver the parcel traffic to the station, where it is handled by rail personnel. On Sunday and Christmas day there will be certain local withdrawals and additions to passenger services and on Boxing Day there will be nine additional afternoon and evening passenger trains to London.

1951 12 24

Please give your phone a rest on Christmas Day unless a call is really essential – and allow many Cambridge Exchange operators to have their Christmas dinners at home in peace. The Telephone Manager, Mr W.E. Dance, has made special staffing arrangements which means there will be 30 operators at the switchboard. On other days there are 130 day and 80 night operators at the controls. The normal daily number of calls dealt with is about 11,000 (quite apart from dialled calls). For those who still intend to telephone on Christmas day he offers this gentle reminder – “Sorry but we can give you no concession charges between 6 pm and 10.30 pm on those days.”

1951 12 27

Some people welcomed in Christmas day at the churches; football matches in the morning also had their fair share of male spectators, probably escaping from the hurry and bustle of Christmas dinner preparations at home. But for the rest of the day Cambridge became a “ghost” city. Just before lunch-time fewer than two dozen people were counted in the city centre and during the remainder of the day the streets echoed with the sound of lone walkers. Although Boxing Day too was for some a stay-at-home day, football matches, cinemas and pantomimes drew others away from their firesides

1951

Cambridge youngsters went over to the US base at Lakenheath to meet Father Christmas – a Santa who stood six foot three inches in his boots and spoke with the composed drawl of a Missouri man. Given by U.S. soldiers of the 60th Anti-Aircraft Artillery Automatic Weapons Battalion and the 98th Chemical Smoke Generating Company it was the party to end all parties. The morning was spent in the camp cinema where cartoons and the inevitable “Western” set the pace for the remainder of the day’s activities. Then they collected their Christmas dinner a la American; that is on an all-in-one tray, in line ahead from the cafeteria. Later every child received a really marvellous gift, the value of which could be estimated in pounds rather than in shillings.

1951 12 27

Sir – I hoped Cambridge enjoyed its Christmas. I have spent Christmas in a few places, but this one which I was compelled to spend in lodgings in Cambridge has been unique. With all cafes, restaurants and hotels closed and with those public houses which were open devoid of their usual snacks and sandwiches I found it impossible to get a meal on Christmas Day. With the complete cessation of public transport it was impossible to go in search of more hospitable regions. Perhaps in the future Cambridge will conform to the standards generally offered by its counterparts elsewhere – “A stranger”

1952 12 23

The first children’s Christmas party given by Pye Ltd since the war was held in the Canteen, St Andrew’s Road, Cambridge, when more than 450 children of employees thoroughly enjoyed themselves. After tea they were entertained by the antics of Mr Shipp and then watched a marionette show presented by the Frith family of Histon. This is a real family show with son Roger, 13, manipulating the puppets, Mrs Lilian Frith making off-stage sounds and her husband Oliver providing the voices. Then Father Christmas arrived with sacks of presents and the children went home – the younger ones tired but happy

1952 12 19

American airmen at Lakenheath contributed generously to their fund to provide Christmas food parcels for old people living near the base. Nearly 500 old folk will get a wonderful surprise when a U.S. airman knocks at their door and hands over a gaily-wrapped hamper containing assorted Christmas fare worth about £2 6s. The names of recipients have been selected from suggestions made by the W.V.S., the Women’s Institutes and the British Legion

1952 12 22

Cambridge was “rather quiet” as far as Christmas shoppers were concerned. The secretary of Joshua Taylor said they had fathers looking fondly and possessively at boy’s train sets, girls examining intricately-mechanised farm tractors and boys glancing critically at dark-eyed dolls. The most precocious doll will blow bubbles and weep real tears, drink milk and needs nappies - and she carries a pipe in her purse (for the bubbles). But the sturdy reliable walker was still the most popular doll of all.

1953 12 29

In the oil-lit schoolroom at Toft on Thursday before Christmas, the chairman of the Parish Council pressed a button, and electricity came to the village. The school was crowded for the official switching-on ceremony. The original proposals were made in 1939 but were held up by the war. With the nationalisation of the supply industry a programme for orderly development was drawn up. Toft and Caldecote were among the first villages in the Cambridge district to receive a supply, which would serve about 70 consumers. They welcomed the arrival of electricity and looked forward to the enjoyment of its many advantages. There were demonstrations of domestic appliances and cookery and washing machines.

1953 01 23

A decision to build a new £100,000 telephone exchange in Cambridge was revealed at the annual Christmas party of the male telephonists of Cambridge G.P.O. It will be quite a big new building, in Trumpington Road. Mr G.S. Cumming, the Chief Night Supervisor, said that the night telephonist’s job was very important and evening calls provide the greatest degree of happiness that the telephone service gives. During the night most of the calls were vitally important. His staff were really wonderful and their wives had a lot to do with it – they sent the men to work happy.

1953 12 12

Nearly 500 people attended one of the most looked-forward to and popular functions of the year, the Dustman’s Christmas Ball in Cambridge Guildhall. Dustbins were displayed on the stage behind the Astrals All Star Dance Orchestra, reminding the dancers of the occasion. Miss Daphne Frostick of

East Road was chosen as the new “Queen of Scavengeria”. The cabaret was amusing and skilful with four men and four girls entering into a ballet. Although the men were a little less graceful than their partners they gave a performance that will long be remembered, but whether for its precision or other factors we will not say

1953 12 22

For unrestrained Yuletide abandon you have to go a long way to beat the Christmas parties held by the U.S. Army at Lakenheath for children in local homes. When 300 British youngsters join forces with 300 uninhibited G.I.s and embark on a festive warpath they simply love every hectic minute of it and the breathtaking pace of the joviality saw them coming back for more. Each child is allocated a buddy – a soldier whose duty it is to see his young charge goes short of nothing. This year they had ham sandwiches and ice-cream, as previous experience has shown you can't expect a young child to sit down and eat a supreme dinner of high quality and gigantic proportions.

1953 12 26

The old Manor House at Papworth St Agnes was severely damaged by fire on Christmas Day. The staircase, sitting room, the kitchen ceiling and two cupboards were burnt and other rooms were affected by smoke and heat which was so great that it blistered paint on the beds. A fireman said: “If the fire had really got going the whole house would have gone, as it is largely constructed of wood”

1953 12 28

At Winston House Boys' Hostel, Brooklands Avenue, Cambridge each lad had presents sent from “Fairy Godmothers” who invited a number of them for dinner. For those who remained there was roast chicken and Christmas pudding. At The Grange Children's' Home, Swavesey the children hopefully hung up their stockings at the foot of the bed and on awaking found they had been filled. There was no shortage of presents at the Little Shelford Children's' Home, partly due to the generosity of the American servicemen station in the vicinity. An American ‘Father Christmas’ arrived from Wimpole Park bringing tennis racquets, bagatelle, darts, dolls and tea sets.

1953 12 29

When the Mayor of Cambridge visited Brookfields Hospital he made a special point of talking to one little boy who has been in an iron lung since August Bank Holiday. It was quite a Christmas for this little patient as Wilfred Pickles had promised to play a record of his favourite tune – ‘The Changing of the Guard’ in his programme ‘Where Are You Now’. The boy is again lucky in that his parents were the only ones allowed to visit him at the hospital during Christmas. Because of the nature of their illnesses visitors may not see the other patients. Every child was given a pillowcase of toys on Christmas morning and their dinner included the traditional turkey and pudding.

1954 10 11

Cambridge housewives are looking forward to their first unrationed Christmas for 14 years, but there may still be a few shortages. Currants will be as expensive as sultanas but raisins, up to one shilling and fourpence a pound will be plentiful. Those who remember Valencia's, those luscious raisins from Spain will welcome their return. There will be plenty of glace cherries for the cake but they will cost a little more. Almonds are the nuts to be snapped up as soon as they appear. For those who can afford the luxury there will be real butter in the cake and rum and brandy butter for the pudding. Americans are willing to pay more than we are, and that explains the Christmas shortage.

1954 12 23

One cold December night just before Christmas 1933 a dozen motor cycling enthusiasts gathered in a room over a public house in Chesterton and decided to form the Centaur Motor Cycle Club. Pre-war it was mainly a social club catering for the weekend rider. With war came petrol rationing and shortage of oil but the club somehow kept going. In 1945 it began to get back on its feet, organising the first scramble at Caxton. They then pioneered events such as trials, grass track racing and sidecar events.

Now, 21 years later, over 160 members crowded into the Dorothy Restaurant to celebrate the club's coming-of-age

1954 12 24

About 400 youngsters crowded into the Rex Cinema, Cambridge, to enjoy a special party for members of the Roy Rogers Club. After seeing a rip-roaring six-shooting picture of cowboys and their hosses the delighted youngsters raced into the Ballroom for the grand party. Everyone received a special Christmas letter from their cowboy hero: 'Howdy Boys and Girls. It sure is swell to send you personal greetings from Dale, Trigger, Bullet and the whole gang. Wishing you wagon loads of fun and a happy trails in the coming year'. The letter was signed by Roy and his 'four-legged friend', Trigger

1954 12 28

For 240 patients at Addenbrooke's Hospital Christmas was anything but a disappointment and one man said it was one of the best he had ever spent. All the wards were decorated on different and original themes; Bowtell Ward had been transformed into a zoo, an animal guarded each bed and there were pink elephants in the corner. Griffiths Ward depicted almost every kind of winter sport, Albert was a mass of inn signs with a stuffed fox suspended from the ceiling, and there were gay coloured candles round a red brick fireplace in Tipperary, which was turned into 'Fallow Wick Inn'.

1954 12 28

Although there were four babies born at the Cambridge Maternity Hospital on Christmas day, not one was given a seasonable name. The first to arrive was Susan Ellis of Beche Road, then Graham Child of Cherry Hinton followed by Peter Michael Jones of Sawston and Jeremy David Pratt of Hills Road, Cambridge.

1954 12 29

After the best-selling year for nylons there are even better prospects for 1955. Sales for Christmas were colossal, as stockings were a favourite present from men to women. By the spring one will be able to walk into a shop and ask for the brand we like in the colour, denier and leg length. The 12 denier 'invisible' stockings will be joined by a new luxury kind called 'super-invisible'. They are nine denier but don't expect to see many because there are only a few machines in this country on which they can be made

1957 01 10

A Cambridge Christmas card publisher told the Bankruptcy Court that he went into business in 1951, designing cards that proved very popular. Next year the cards were despatched by the printer direct to his customers. But some were sub-standard and he lost orders. In 1955 he hired a printing works in Baldock but the press broke down. Then the bank restricted his overdraft. His skill as an artist exceeded his ability as a businessman. 57 01 10a

1958 12 29

The villagers of Cowlinge received a much appreciated Christmas present when Council chairman Clifford Colson pushed a button to inaugurate the electricity supply and his daughter Jane extinguished two lighted candles – which represented the primitive lighting of the past. Forty housewives were at the village hall to see the 'switch-on' and view an exhibition of cookers, heaters and washing machines. Some already have TV sets and look forward to watching programmes for the first time. 58 12 19

1958 12 29

Coun Burkitt, Chairman of the County Council, made a Christmas Day visit to Midfield Children's Home, Oakington where children were playing happily with their presents and one presented him with an ash tray he had made. At the Grange Children's Home, Swavesey the children were given an additional treat when he played carols on the piano while at Willingham House Old People's Home he admired the turkey which the residents were going to have for their dinner. 58 12 29

1958 12 29

On Boxing Day the Mayor visited Fulbourn Hospital where he gave the traditional 'kick-off' in the football match between patients and staff. The wards had been decorated with loving care while in the sick bay the nurses had painted some beautiful Christmas scenes on the walls. Many of the wards were filled with exotic fruits and flowers made out of paper, some by the Sisters in their spare time and others with the help of patients. Television now plays a large part in the life of the wards and viewing and singing carols took up much of the holiday. 58 12 29

1959 12 03

A monitor screen at the back of the church, shirt-sleeved technicians tip-toeing around, cameras rolling silently up and down the aisle and bright glaring lights pointing in every direction. This was just a part of what was involved in the telerecording of a Christmas service in Gt St Mary's church. It is to be shown by Anglia Television on Christmas night. The service was intended as a corporate act of worship for overseas students in Cambridge and a reminder of how the nations of the world might live together. 59 12 03b & c

1959 12 30

Cambridge Cats Home run by the Blue Cross in Garlic Row was filled to capacity with 75 animals over the Christmas holidays. In the course of a year the Superintendents, Dennis Broomfield and his wife, look after over 1,000 'lodgers' and a very large number of strays. Each cat has a large run to itself and the nights are spent in warm boxes lined with straw and cloth inside spacious 'hutlets'. Each cat eats about half a pound of fish a day – good quality rock salmon steaks - and gets through a good quantity of milk. 59 12 30b

1959 12 30

The annual Grantchester Boxing Day barrel rolling contest was inaugurated three years ago by Mr R. Healey, landlord of the Rose and Crown public house. It is becoming increasingly popular and attracts people from the surrounding district. It consists of three races. The men's was won by Mr Maurice, the women's by Miss Barbara Peters and the children's by Miss Patricia Rose with Miss Sharyn Griggs second. The youngest competitor was five-year-old Helen Tanner. 59 12 30

1960 12 07

Officials at USAF Alconbury are preparing for Christmas. The Chapel-sponsored food baskets will benefit 150 UK families in Huntingdon, there will be a mammoth party for children, 'teen dances and an appearance by Santa Claus. Each quarters are expected to make an appropriate Christmas display or decoration; last year thousands of people drove a special marked route through the gaily-decorated barracks area to view 'Christmas USA'. 60 12 07b

1960 12 16

Amongst those working on Christmas Day will be 30 men at RAF Oakington. Being a training school and operational station there must be a handful of men to tend the sick and guard the vital installations on the base. They will have a six-course Christmas dinner served by officers and senior NCOs plus free beer and cigarettes. They can then relax with a book or in front of the television, hoping that no crises will arise to disturb their peace. But if it does there are an additional 150 men in the near vicinity who can be called in for reinforcements. 60 12 16a

1960 12 19

Americans seem to be doing more than us to welcome the season. In the married quarters at Lakenheath – in streets where sudden ramps make the traffic go slowly – Christmas trees and coloured lamps were glowing in the windows, garlands of holly hung on front doors and stencilled pictures of Santa Claus, painted on the window glass, caught the light from the living rooms. They can buy frozen poultry, coloured glass balls or foamy artificial 'snow' in atomisers to spray on mirrors

and windows. The churches, which are likely to be full on Christmas Eve, have been organising carol services for children 60 12 19a

1961 12 27

It is going to be even colder than it was during most of the Christmas freeze-up when ice on the Cam trapped several swans in the water. On Christmas morning fire appliances went to St Giles' church where a small fire severely damaged an electric motor in the organ. They were also called to Avery's scale makers premises in Regent Street and at Joseph Lucas on Newmarket Road where pipes in the ceilings burst and flooded the premises. The Waterworks Company dealt with 30 burst pipes on Christmas Day 61 12 27 61 12 30

1962 05 10

The 80 women who work among the paper Christmas trees at Whittlesford are hopping mad with Mr J.H. Tickell who runs one of the village public houses. He told an inquiry "We do not want more factories in the village as they attract the wrong sort of girls". They ride their cycles three or four abreast down village streets, indulge in raucous behaviour and give the female equivalent of a wolf whistle if any man passes, he claimed. But the owner of the paper-decoration factory says they were nearly all respectable married women and a few single girls of very good character. 62 05 10b

1962 08 29

Francis Pym MP visited the Whittlesford Manufacturing Company's factory, the largest in the country dealing only with Christmas decorations and goods. For two hours he saw how hundreds of miles of tinsel and coloured strings are produced throughout the year and was then shown the large wholesale import warehouse where toys from all over the world are waiting to find their way into children's stockings on Christmas morning. "It is an excellent industry for a village like Whittlesford", he said. 62 08 29

1962 12 22

King Street poultry mart held its last Christmas sale. It has existed for nearly 50 years and now the auctioneer Claude Kirkup and clerk, Alfred Harding will retire. Mr Kirkup, a well-known figure, has dealt with about 1,000 chickens, turkeys and geese this week alone. He started in the mart in 1918 and was joined by Mr Harding in 1922. The site was purchased recently by Jesus College 62 12 22

1962 12 08

Collections at the Round Table's Christmas tree in St Andrew the Great churchyard began in 1953. Last year they raised money to provide 415 parcels for old people, each containing £1-worth of Christmas cheer. The names of old people who benefit from this magnificent effort are revised each year and every person is visited before Christmas. One year a 30-foot high tree was delivered and putting it up meant dislocating the traffic outside Christ's College for some time. 62 12 08

1963 01 05

Because of the snow, making roads impassable, the Rev John Hornby, Rector of Croydon Church, walked ten miles 'cross country' last Sunday to Tadlow, East Hatley and then back to Croydon to hold services in the villages. Mr Hornby has shown himself prepared to venture off the well-worn path on previous occasions. In October he conducted a thanksgiving service in a Croydon public house and later followed it up with Christmas carols. He has been heard to comment "I would rather have one person who is in church 'to do the business' than a hundred who are there because they think they ought to be" 63 01 05

1964 10 16

Sir Winston Churchill used to stay at Sutton as a small boy when his great uncle, the Hon. C.F.O. Spencer, was Vicar of the parish. He often went at Christmas time and would worship in the magnificent church which is famous for its unusual tower which dates back to the 14th century.

Because of its similarity to the Ely octagon it may be that it was built by craftsmen constructing the cathedral. The Rev Spencer was responsible for considerable restoration work and today the church is in a fine state. It seats 600 people and is filled several times a year, particularly for harvest festival 64
10 16b

1972 12 27

Flu hit the now-traditional barrel-rolling relay race at Grantchester on Boxing Day and a cool drizzle resulted in fewer than usual spectators turning out for the event. But neither the practical difficulties nor the celebrations of the previous day prevented a team from nearby Barton romping home minutes ahead of their rivals to carry off the 48-pint prize. Their nearest rivals were a team from the Queen's Head at Sawston. Women made their debut last year but illness had depleted entries down to one team - from the Green Dragon in Cambridge so the four women agreed to divide into two teams and Mrs Tricia Newman and Mrs Ann Carter won the day. Their prize was 48 pints

1973 12 14

Mid Anglia seems set for a bonanza Christmas with people determined to enjoy themselves while they can – come power, petrol or rail crises. Most of the region's shops report that business is booming although they are unclear as to whether this is because of the traditional pre-Christmas spending sprees or because housewives are stocking up in fear of worse to come, hoarding things which they thought might become scarce. Many of the smaller towns believe the petrol shortage is helping them by keeping shoppers away from the big centres, Cambridge and Bedford.

1973 12 18

Thousands of women planning to look just a bit prettier this Christmas with a holiday hairdo will be disappointed. For leading Cambridge hairdressers have announced they have been forced to cut their bookings by almost half because of Government measures that say only five out of the next ten days can be worked. Joshua Taylor's hairdressing department "Raymond" said, "We can do simple appointments which won't involve the use of electricity but I estimate we will have to turn about 1,000 people away"

1973 12 24

Mid Anglia stores say they are making valiant efforts to give the public every opportunity to do their Christmas shopping. Most will depend heavily on emergency lighting and special security measures will be taken to beat the shoplifters. Eaden Lilley say that on days without electricity old gas lamps still fitted in the shop will be used. The January sales have been brought forward at Robert Sayle to take advantage of remaining days with electricity before the more stringent regulations come into force in the New Year

1973 12 24

Shoppers in Cambridge defied the gloom of crisis-torn Britain and were out in force to do their last-minute Christmas shopping. At Woolworth's in Sidney Street the manager said: "People are determined to enjoy Christmas despite the gloom and doom". Tesco, in Regent Street, said they were fairly busy. The general manager of Joshua Taylor said that trade was about 20% up compared with last year.

1973 12 27

It looked like Sunday in Cambridge yesterday with most of the city's shops closed, and only a few people on the streets. Only a few small "corner" grocers and one supermarket were open for housewives who ran out of essentials. In the city centre Waring and Gillow, the recently-opened furnishers, began their sale. Most of the staff of city shops were having the day off after putting in extra time to cope with the pre-Christmas rush. Most of the shops have used their five days of electricity and will not be able to use any more until the New Year

1973 12 27

Home sides routed all opposition at Grantchester in the annual Boxing Day barrel rolling competition. And not only did the Rose and crown men's and women's teams carry of the 24-dozen bottles of beer between them, they also ensured that it was a family affair. For with just one exception, the members of the teams were all related

1974 01 11

With heavy symbolism and an optimism to fight the gloom of the national crisis, Cambridge's erstwhile unlit Christmas lights were lit up in all their glory last night. At least a small group of them in Sidney Street were aglow for just two minutes. In the face of the ban on public decorative lighting the Chamber of Commerce could not have the cheerful Christmas light gaiety in the city centre. But, because they had bought new lights, they thought they would like at least a glimpse of what might have been, had it not been for the Government bans.

1974 12 04

Cambridge chamber of commerce has discounted criticism that around-the-clock Christmas lighting in the city's streets is a waste of electricity. They consider that to switch off Christmas decorations now would only bring about an atmosphere of gloom when people should be confident and full of beans. Their president, Mr George Abbott, said: "We have been assured power stations have enough coal for a normal winter but if there is any suggestion the power situation is likely to become serious all local businesses will co-operate fully".

1974 12 10

Large-scale ward closures at both Old and New Addenbrooke's hospital are planned over Christmas and New Year because not enough nurses will be available to staff them. Patients will be sent home and only emergencies dealt with. The closures have been made necessary because the Health Minister, Mrs Barbara Castle, has ordered than nurses should take an extra six days holiday before March 31st next year and wants the leave taken as soon as possible. A nurse said: "We obviously welcome the extra leave, but it was not necessary for Mrs Castle to order it to be taken right away. We feel she took the measure to placate the more militant member of the profession

1974 12 16

This year for the first time in more than 30 years a group of Polish people will have a family-style Christmas in their own homes. After the war they arrived in this country as displaced persons or refugees. Because they were sick, they were admitted to mental hospitals, and they did not learn the English language. The new house, bought by the British Council for Aid to Refugees, has been simply but comfortably furnished. As a group, they are now working out what they will have for Christmas dinner. The occasion marks the beginning of a new life

1974 12 21

The economic crisis does not seem to have had any marked effect on the influx of Christmas visitors to Cambridge hotels this year. All but one hotel in the city says it is as full as it wishes to be. The Garden House Hotel closes down after lunch on Christmas Day until New Year's Eve & the University Arms Hotels closes half its rooms to allow half its staff a free Christmas. The Gonville Hotel is "as full as it wishes to be" but the manager of the Royal Cambridge Hotel said "we have only about a third of last year's Christmas booking so far"

1974 12 27

Home teams carried off the honours – or rather the beer – in Grantchester's annual Boxing Day barrel rolling race down the village's main street. Both the winning men's and women's team were from the Rose and Crown, Grantchester, whose landlord, Mr Len Tanner, organises the race. The Rose and Crown team were in fact all on the staff of Christ's college, Cambridge organised and trained by their kitchen manager, Mr John Bolton, and storeman Mr Ted Darling. Their recipe for success "I had four whiskies before I started. I think the more you have the better you do", said Mr Gardiner

1975 11 13

The turkey, once a rare delicacy for the ordinary dining table, now reigns supreme on the country's Christmas menu. This season there are forecasts that turkeys will cost 40% more than last year with the top weights selling at about 50p a lb. One of the men rearing turkeys locally is Mr David Rayner, who farms 1200 acres at Burgh Hall, Swaffham Bulbeck. He has been producing turkeys for 15 years on an otherwise arable enterprise and now averages 10,000 birds a year

1977 01 13

The Cambridge "park and ride" scheme is to be continued indefinitely on Saturdays because of its success during the Christmas and New Year periods. At present the cattle market on the south side is used as a temporary car park and people can get at 15p return trip into the city centre on a bus. The service was started by the Eastern Counties Omnibus Company with the backing of the Chamber of Commerce and the City Council. The cattle market has spaces for about 700 cars and was constantly three-quarters full immediately before Christmas. The service might end if the city council wanted it to cease being a car park or if the bus company lost a lot of money on it.

1977 12 12

The Spinners filled the 1,600-seat Cambridge Sports Hall for the second time this year, with their Christmas show. They are a perfectly assured, wholly-professional, middle-of-the-road group with a wide-ranging repertoire and pitched into a selection of songs and carols including some of their hits like "The Family of Man". Audience participation is very much a part of the technique; they had the people at the back drowning the rest of the audience in a four-part 'round' & started a three-part medley with "While Shepherds Washed Their Socks by Night"

1977 12 21

Cambridge market is the logical starting point for the Christmas shopping trek: it's close to shops of every different kind, and is surrounded by banks. But heading straight for the centre and hoping to find a parking space somewhere is a mug's game at the best of times. At Christmas it's plain daft, although people still do it. Traffic wardens are not so many Santa Clauses in disguise and you'll just end up going round the one-way system a few times ... slowly. Or paying £6 for the privilege of stopping.

1978 12 05

Supplying the needs of the massive Arbury housing estate is a daunting task but at Christmas the Arbury Court shopping precinct offers everything you could need. T. Sutton has Christmas trees while a good range of poultry is available from Dyers Meat and J. Whittaker. On a frosty morning the most tempting smell in the precinct is that of freshly-baked bread coming from Markillies Bakery who offer a wide range of cakes and pastries. Arbury Hardware has also taken on a festive appearance with a good selection of gifts from Timex watches to figurines.

1978 12 06

Newmarket has organised a really festive Christmas this year aimed at encouraging shoppers to discover the benefits of friendly, personal service and a wide variety of shops and services. Until a few years ago shoppers needed to be endowed with very quick reflexes to avoid the many heavy lorries that thundered through the town centre. But now after the opening of the bypass motorists can drive easily about and park in one of the many free car parks.

1978 12 21

The northern bypass, described as a 'Christmas present to Cambridge' was officially opened at noon and then closed after police expressed reservations about the state of the nine-mile road and its interchanges. But as dusk was falling the barriers were pushed back and it was opened to the public. It includes one of the longest straight stretches of dual carriageway in the country and police asked drivers to get used to the road slowly. With the completion of the interchanges next year and the

opening of the M11 Cambridge will have a road system surrounding it for which many other cities would give their eye-teeth

1978 12 30

Residents of Fishers Lane and High Street Orwell were surprised on Christmas Eve when each house received a bottle of sherry as a gift from a businessman from Dubai who moved into the village a few weeks before. He said: "It appears to be a genuine village with an established community and I need a quiet life here, away from business. Whatever this village needs I am prepared to help". His commercial interests include construction, property, hovercraft and broadcasting. He would like to build a country club like one he has in Dubai which would provide evening entertainment, Italian cuisine, a crèche and would be open in the afternoon for families.

1980 12 04

Some of the best-looking Christmas crackers are produced at the Waterbeach Work Experience Unit. Crackers have become an established part of the training given to 'non-academic' young people in their last year at school who may have special difficulties in finding a job and adapting to work. More than 1,500 boxes a year are produced. 80 12 04a

1981 11 13

Skirting the roadworks and dodging the demolition rubble, the visitor finds the Kite area of Cambridge hardly the easiest or most picturesque place to shop. Almost one side of Fitzroy Street is empty. The top end, which once included a Post Office, sweet shop, denture repairer and café called the Toby Jug, has been flattened. The Co-op department store in Burleigh Street have axed the traditional ceremonial arrival of Father Christmas as it would aggravate traffic problems. Add the lack of parking space and it is not surprising that traders fear for their Christmas profits. 81 11 13a

1981 12 09

Saffron Walden cattle market will close for the last time after its 121st Christmas Fat Stock Show and Sale. It had been held for several centuries but recently has been dealing with only 40 cattle a week because farmers were switching from livestock to more profitable arable farming. In future they will take their livestock to the Cambridge cattle market. 81 12 09

1981 12 10

There has been a massive response to the first children's Christmas science lectures in Cambridge. Pupils from Coton school were so determined to attend that they walked a mile to the Cavendish Laboratory. Other schools organised coaches and cars so their children could attend the demonstrations on 'Light and Colour', showing that science is an exciting subject worthy of pursuit. 81 12 10

1981 12 18

Austin Sennitt from Stretham is £1,000 richer after winning the beef championship at Cambridge Christmas fatstock show. His 500 kg animal went to a Cambridge butcher, John Farrow. His family have been farming in the area for about 100 years and the cattle are raised on barley grown on the farm. For the first time the championship was closed to anybody who hasn't used the market regularly, which nearly doubled the normal entry list. 81 12 18

1982 04 15

A Saffron Walden bakery is expanding to cope with the increased demand for Christmas puddings made from a grandmother's secret recipe. Chris and Tim Cole turned out 15,000 last year and have now won a contract from the largest departmental store in the United States – Sax in New York. This year they expect to produce about 40,000 puddings. 82 04 15

1985 01 10

The Christmas holiday lectures for youngsters have been held at the University Engineering Department for the last 20 years, with experts speaking on a wide variety of unusual subjects. But this year's attendance was disappointing, attracting only 1,600 to the series of eight presentations. The organiser, Mrs K. Joice Taylor, feels schools have not been advertising them to pupils. Eight years ago grants from the education authority were stopped and unless she can attract sponsorship they may have to cease. 85 01 10

1985 12 12

St Neots annual Christmas Livestock show will be held at the cattle market in Huntingdon Street for the last time. It was started in 1883 and continued even during the war years when the sale of fat stock for killing was not allowed and pheasants and other meat was sold instead. Up until 1953 it was run by Ekins but then the St Neots Christmas Show Society was formed. The market will continue to be held every Thursday until March 31st but then the site will be redeveloped 85 12 12c

1985 12 23

Christmas is just another day for some residents of the Church Housing Association in Willow Walk. But despite the distinct lack of enthusiasm Captain Andrew Entecott and his helpers are busy at work. The cook will be dishing up turkey and all the trimmings for 36 men and gifts will be presented in the afternoon. The Cyrenian's home in Short Street is like a big happy family and they have planned a Christmas meal. But many homeless people will be wandering the streets with nowhere to go 85 12 23

1986 12 24

Father Christmas will have his work cut out to satisfy the child of 1986. Gone are the days when a simple doll or toy gun would do. When asked, Lynsey Bullivant wanted a toy pound puppy because they look so sad, Claire Boydell of St Ives hoped for a trip to watch ice-skaters Torvill and Dean in action and Richard Burton of Willingham wanted a cup win for Cambridge United. Caroline Robinson of Cambridge wrote to Santa: "I am trying to be good. I know you were in my chimney pot because you kicked some soot down" 86 12 24a

1987 11 20

Townsend Toys and Cycles in Burleigh Street is a family firm set up nearly 100 years ago in Norfolk Street. This Christmas top sellers include a range of small animal characters, 'Sylvanian Families' featuring McBurrows moles, Slydale foxes and Treefellow owls while the Manta Force spacecraft comes complete with vehicles and spacemen inside. Since the BMX craze slackened off some devotees have switched their attention to skateboards; beginners can select a plastic board for £12 while a professional can spend £200. 87 11 20 & a

1987 12 22

More than 500 Christmas turkeys, chicken and geese went under the hammer at Cambridge's turkey auction. Prices for turkeys from 62-83p per lb while chickens fetched 62-72p lb The biggest seller was a king-sized 35lb stag turkey. Meanwhile Mrs Thatcher's turkey, specially selected from Valley Farm, Meldreth, was personally delivered to Downing Street in a limousine by farm owner Tony Burlton who started rearing turkeys at the farm 21 years ago. It was prepared for the oven by the farm's butcher, Brian Collins and taken to a London florist to receive the final presentation treatment 87 12 22

1988 12 12

Shoppers gave Cambridge a miss on Saturday amid fears of Christmas chaos. The usual long queues in to traffic choked car parks were absent as motorists virtually breezed into the centre. 88 12 12

1989 12 04

The biggest Christmas tree in Britain, an 86 ft Norwegian spruce, was erected on Queens' Green. It will be lit by more than 5,000 electric candles. But the tree was so damaged that a tree surgeon had to

be called in and some branches lopped off. These will be pushed back in again to make the tree look resplendent. But as the tree was being prepared for its electric lights it was discovered that acid rain had burnt the top six feet; this had to be lopped off and another strapped to its top 89 12 04, 06a, 07a

1989 12 12

Mill Road and the Broadway are a convenient place for Christmas shopping with many cycle shops supplying everything from BMXs to tandems. There is an extensive choice of clothes stores offering everything from ski and leisure wear to glittering ball gowns, from distinctive menswear to the popular new 'rave' clothing. There are futon sofabeds, Magimix blenders, video cassettes for under £10 or the most sophisticated hi-fi audio systems. The many discount stores and secondhand shops have inexpensive gifts 89 12 12d

1990 01 03

A bridge between Meldreth and Orwell which spans the River Cam at Malton Lane collapsed on Christmas Day morning after part of a buttress was washed away during storms. County engineers say it will cost about £50,000 to replace and they may construct a temporary bridge during reconstruction. The choice is whether to repair the bridge or rebuild it. The road may be closed for two months – 90 01 03

1990 01 18

Cambridge's giant Christmas tree taken down after raising less money than hope for – 90 01 18b